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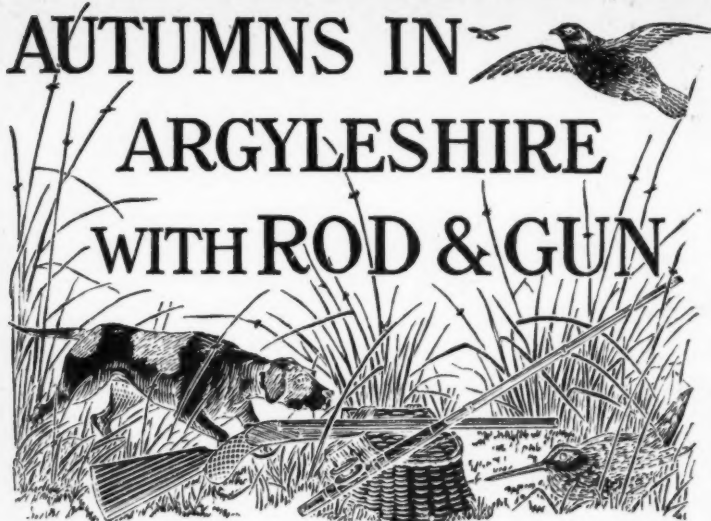
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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER 1900.

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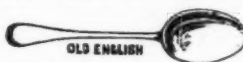
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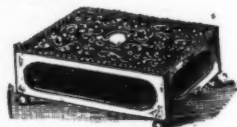
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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER 1900.

## *One of Ourselves.*<sup>1</sup>

By I. B. WALFORD,  
AUTHOR OF 'MR. SMITH,' &C.

### CHAPTER XXVII.

#### IN THE BACK PARLOUR.

WITHIN the private parlour of Farrell's Bank a conference was being held of a nature never before witnessed in that place. All the partners, save one, were assembled, and whisperings and nudgings had been rife outside when with hasty steps and down-cast eyes they had passed through, omitting customary salutations, and disappearing instantaneously within the closed doors of the sanctum.

'They're all in there now except Billy,' nodded a youngster to his fellow clerk, 'and Macmillan with them. What's up?'

'Macmillan has sent for them.'

'But where's Billy?'

'Where's Billy? Look here.'

'Eh?' said the first speaker, dropping his jaw in amazement. For the other had solemnly and slowly winked his eye.

In another moment both were writing busily.

Within the sacred precincts of the parlour the scene was, as we have said, one unparalleled in the annals of the bank, and though a thunderbolt falling at the feet of the worthy gentlemen who had been summoned in haste to the conclave could not have astounded them more, we can guess the nature of the communi-

<sup>1</sup> Copyright 1899 by Longmans, Green & Co.

cation which the deeply agitated bank manager had found it necessary to lay before them.

Broken exclamations and ejaculations had interrupted him at various points, but he had at length got out all he had to say, and folded up the paper in his hand.

His listeners stirred for the first time. Stephen walked to the window; Thomas looked towards a chair and towards Charles, who was between him and it. 'I—I should like to sit down. I—I—your arm, Charles. We are—greatly indebted to Mr. Macmillan, who has done—has done his duty, has done—done his duty,' he repeated, mechanically. 'Stephen?' looking round; Stephen hastily approached; 'would you?'—and the white face, looking double its size because of its whiteness, was turned appealingly first to one and then to the other, but rested on Stephen; 'will you speak?' in a dull, muffled whisper.

Stephen nodded.

'Would Mr. Thomas take anything?' suggested Macmillan, compassionately. 'Can I get you something, sir? A mouthful of brandy?'

'No, no; nothing, nothing.'

('That was another of his lies,' muttered Stephen to himself. 'Lied all through. Poor old Tom looks more like a teetotaler than a drunkard.')

Aloud: 'Mr. Macmillan?'

Macmillan was all attention. 'As Mr. Thomas says, we are under a deep sense of obligation to you. Your method of procedure has been admirable; only——' The spokesman hummed and hawed, by no means clear of what he was going to say. What he and they all wanted was to hear the whole story over again, to struggle with it, to master it—not as now he stunned by it. 'We fully appreciate your reluctance to act, but you say you have been uneasy for some little time past?'

'I have, sir.'

'Would it not have been—could not something have been done?'

'You know, sir, the confidence we all placed in Mr. William. If he undertook the management of anything, it was sure to be successful. Mr. Thomas,' with a glance towards the armchair, 'never went into any new business without Mr. William's approval. He was the backbone——'

A groan from Thomas.

'We realise all this,' said Stephen, courteously. (In the bank



parlour he was another man, an infinitely more sensible and agreeable man than in society.) 'And, of course, if it had not been for this misplaced confidence, what has happened could not have been possible. Still, you have been uneasy of late?' He stuck to his point.

'Only during the past ten days or a fortnight, sir. There were things—and yet Mr. William was always able to explain them. He said he had your authority and Mr. Thomas's and Mr. Charles's,' indicating each in turn, 'for taking entire charge during your absence; and as I knew that even when coming here regular——'

'Yes, yes. We understand, then, that he came here up to last Tuesday?'

'Left soon after two o'clock on Tuesday, sir. A little earlier than usual, but he said he had a train to catch. Going down to the Isle of Wight, I think he said, and meant to take a few days' holiday, but whether there or not I don't think was mentioned. He had come back about a week before from Scotland, where he had been shooting——'

'With me,' said Stephen, his eyes rolling at the recollection.

'And as everything had gone on all right during that absence,' proceeded the manager, 'he said to me, laughingly, that he was tempted to leave me in charge again. It was that same night that Mr. Foster came to me saying, did I know Mr. William was drawing very large sums out of the bank? He had been doing that for some time past, sending them, as we supposed, to Mr. Thomas and Mr. Charles——'

'Never a penny did he send me,' burst forth Thomas.

'Nor me,' echoed Charles.

Macmillan bent his head to each.

'Mr. Foster had heard a little talk,' hesitated he.

'Send for Mr. Foster,' said Stephen, curtly.

The head cashier appeared. He had been waiting to be summoned.

We need not weary our readers with accounts of fraudulent transactions, particulars of which were not learned till later, when subsequent events brought about a full exposure; suffice it to say that William Farrell, betraying kinsmen and friends—all, indeed, who had ever placed themselves within his reach—now stood revealed a scoundrel. And William Farrell—where was he?

'Perhaps Mr. Stephen would kindly give us his opinion,' began Thomas, in weak, tremulous accents, and he made an

involuntary movement towards the man-of-the-world partner with an imploring look pitiable to see. Stephen, who had been drumming on the window-panes with his fingers, reckoning up within himself what he was likely to lose from first to last, turned quickly.

It must be remembered that he had never thought of the Farrell brothers as his brothers, and therefore, staggered as he was by the fatal disclosures, the foundations of the earth did not give way beneath his feet so utterly as beneath those of the simple dupes who had added affection to credulity.

'I think we shall have to find this defaulter,' said he, pompously. 'No steps have yet been taken in that direction, I presume?' to Macmillan.

Macmillan coughed discreetly behind his hand; an almost imperceptible glance towards the cashier was caught and understood by his interrogator.

'Hum—ah—yes,' said he; 'we need not detain Mr. Foster, who has given us most valuable evidence. I shall join you presently——' Aside to him: 'Well, Macmillan?' the coast being clear.

'There is a person, sir—Mr. Thomas, have I your leave to speak freely? Thank you, sir. Mr. William, it was known among us, did not always live at his lodgings in Jermyn Street, although he had been there more regularly of late; but he had—excuse my mentioning it, gentlemen—another establishment. I have—ahem!—seen it myself. Mr. William kept it very quiet—very quiet indeed; but a friend of mine in the neighbourhood got to know the lady, and it's his belief there has been a marriage—yes, Mr. Thomas,' for Thomas had started visibly—'he's sure of it. He can't account for things in any other way, he says. You were asking me if anything had been done, Mr. Stephen. I got my friend to look round by Ivy Lodge three nights ago. He called on me the next morning to say it was shut up, and a board "To Let" on the palings.'

'Ah!' All present drew a deep breath.

'Knowing I was particular for news, my friend went to the agents and found that Mrs. Gray—that was the name she went by—had left for America——'

'For America!'

'On Wednesday last. She was in the habit of going and coming, sometimes staying away a long time; but on the present occasion she asked the agents to let the house for her by the year

or on lease, and they were to forward all communications to the General Post Office, New York.'

'Wednesday last?' repeated Thomas, looking interrogatively at his cousin. 'I think Tuesday was the day you said he was here, Mr. Macmillan?'

'It was, sir. I thought of that. That was what I said to myself; but it seemed impossible—I couldn't believe it. Then I came in and found Mr. Foster very much upset, and he showed me his books. It was then I wired off to you, gentlemen.'

The gentlemen looked at each other, and, strange to say, it was Charles who opened his lips, speaking for the first time.

'Emma always said there was something of that kind,' said he.

'Emma said so?' Stung by a sudden irritation, Thomas, who had been huddled up in his chair, too weak to hurt a fly, sat bolt upright and glared at his brother. '*Emma* said so?'

'She told me. I should never have thought of such a thing for myself.'

('Bet you wouldn't!' muttered Stephen, aside.)

'She used to laugh at your wife's wanting to marry him off,' proceeded Charles, not above a hit at Priscilla since Thomas had glared at Emma. 'She seems to have known what she was talking about, too. She said he would never marry, and once or twice lately she has said, "I should not wonder if he were married already." She always declared she would make him own to it.'

'Humph!' said Thomas.

'But we have no proof that there is a marriage in the case,' said Stephen, meditatively, 'although certainly there appears to be an entanglement. You had nothing definite to go upon?' to Macmillan.

'No, sir, only the feeling in the neighbourhood. And people generally do know, sir. They know fast enough when there has been no marriage.'

'Where was this—this establishment?'

'Not far from "Swiss Cottage," sir. "Swiss Cottage" is my friend's station.'

'You think, then, that the disappearance of this female and that of Mr. William Farrell date from the same period?' inquired Stephen, keeping his attention to Macmillan, regardless of some byplay between the brothers, who were interchanging reminiscences in undertones.

'I think, sir, there can be little doubt of it.'

'And that they are gone together?'

'I should say, sir, it looks like it.'

'Nothing has been seen of him or her since Tuesday?'

'She did not leave till Wednesday, sir.'

'Right. I recall you said so. The Isle of Wight was, of course, a blind. The two were off that night for America.'

'That seems likely, sir.'

'And to search for him there,' said Stephen, now addressing himself to the other partners, 'would be like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay. He has outwitted us, and can snap his fingers at us. You, Thomas, were kept at Homburg—I was asked to persuade you to remain there; Charles was safe at Cromer——'

'He came to me there, and got Emma to say she wished to stay on,' interposed Charles.

'And for myself, I was led on to disclose my autumn campaign. It suited him exactly. He found each of us more accommodating than the other; and the absence of one and all has enabled him to give us the slip with the utmost ease. Now, there is nothing for it but to see if we can weather the blast——'

'We can—we must,' cried both brothers simultaneously.

'Of course, if we can do *that*, it resolves itself into a family matter. I allow I am relieved if you think we can,' owned Stephen, with whom the thought of exposure had outweighed all the rest.

It was explained to him that, so far as could be at present ascertained, apprehensions on this score might be dismissed from his mind. Macmillan had already ascertained thus much, and could speak hopefully, if not positively.

'He took all he could, Mr. Stephen, but there were things he could not touch. It was wonderful how much he did contrive to get at, though,' quoth the old man, ruefully.

'Wonderful? Why wonderful? There was not one of us here but would have trusted him with every sixpence we possessed. He was our master and instructor—eh, Charles? What was it about some little mistake you made lately?' Suddenly Stephen was back on the Highland moor and Billy Farrell, the pleasantest of companions, cheerily trudging along by his side. 'He thought you might as well extend your Cromer holiday till he had put that right,' continued Stephen, excitedly. 'Eh?'

Charles looked at Macmillan, and Macmillan back at him. Then the latter softly shook his head. 'Mr. Charles has had nothing to do with the bank affairs for a number of weeks,' said

he. 'And I think, sir,' turning to him, 'that if I may make so bold, Mr. William often took a kind of advantage of your not being—not being so much of a business man as himself, and used to tell you that you had been doing wrong when there was nothing wrong at all. He liked to make you feel his superiority.'

'And took me in by the same trick,' said Stephen, and a muttered oath escaped. But his eye fell on the two broken-hearted brothers, and pity displaced anger.

'Thomas—Charles,' he held out a hand to each and wrung them in silence, while Macmillan turned his head aside. The poor old man was one with them in spirit.

A tap at the door, and he was instantly on the alert to prevent intrusion.

'Tell Mr. Jones to attend——'

'The gentleman says he must see one of the Mr. Farrells.'

'They are engaged. Mr. Jones will——'

'What is it?' Mr. Stephen Farrell, not unwilling to have his attention diverted, looked round. 'Anything important?' Then in the manager's ear: 'We must take care what we are about. There must be nothing to raise suspicion. I dare say they are talking outside already.'

'Shall I, then, attend to this gentleman, sir?' Macmillan took the hint. 'If you will excuse me for a moment?'

And it was but for a moment; he was back almost immediately with a deep deprecatory countenance and a card in his hand. As in duty bound, he took the card to the senior partner.

Thomas put it aside fretfully. 'Impossible; I can't see any one; I can't attend to business. He must call another time.'

'Perhaps I——' began Stephen, and mindful of appearances he glanced at the card. It might be that of an important personage, and though it was hardly to be expected that poor Tom, flabbergasted as he was, should think of this—but he started when he read the superscription, 'Mr. Lionel Colvin.'

He started and changed colour. Lionel Colvin, a persistent visitor who would not be denied admittance? Lionel, who had no account at the bank, had no business dealings with it? Lionel, the most modest, unobtrusive young fellow? What could this portend?

'You told Mr. Colvin we were engaged?'

'He said, sir, that he must see one or other of you.'

'Must? There's no "must" in the case,' frowned Thomas, with that curious wrath at a trifle we all know when the heart is

freshly seared and bleeding. 'Must, indeed!' but he was silenced by a gesture from his cousin, who stood rapidly considering.

'We will see him,' to Macmillan. 'I have an impression that this gentleman may possibly bring us information—or at any rate that we may be able indirectly to gain information from him on the case before us. But as it is likely to be of a very private nature——'

'Shall I withdraw, sir, and send him in?'

'If you please.'

The door shut behind the old man, and Stephen turned quickly to the brothers.

'This is a new development, or I am mistaken. Be prepared. I have a conviction that we are about to hear something. When William was with us in Scotland——' but there was no time for more.

Lionel entered and faced three pairs of eyes full upon him without flinching. Beyond a bow he made no attempt at salutation.

'I am here,' he said abruptly, 'to ask, does anyone know what has become of—my sister? Yes, my sister,' repeated he, more calmly, for the simultaneous start and thrill of horror upon every countenance carried its own conviction—'my sister, gentlemen,' addressing himself more directly to Thomas and Charles Farrell, 'decoyed away by your brother.'

'No—no.' It was Thomas who cried aloud and recoiled as if he had received a blow in the face. 'Stephen—what is he saying, Stephen? Charles—Stephen—oh, my God!' A heavy groan, as the big figure swayed helplessly to and fro.

Stephen Farrell put his hand on Lionel's shoulder, and drew him to the farther end of the room.

'He's not fit to bear it,' whispered he. 'Have what mercy you can. We—Mr. Charles Farrell and—I will attend to anything—anything you have to say to us, but you can see for yourself,' glancing towards the broad back heaving tumultuously, 'that he can stand no more.'

'No more?' echoed Lionel, with a sense of dizzy wonder. 'No more, did you say? Is this then?—am I then?—I do not understand. I asked to see Mr. William Farrell,' his tone hardening.

'They ought to have told you he is not at the bank to-day.'

'They did. They asked me to wait. But I have that to say which cannot wait. Where is Mr. William Farrell?' impatience rising.

'We should be glad to tell you if we knew ourselves,' said Stephen, quietly. 'Mr. Colvin, you have stepped behind the scenes. I do not say you had not a right to do so. I fear, I greatly fear, you had——'

'If ever man had.'

'Ah!' A long, indrawn breath.

'I have such a right,' said Lionel, between his teeth, 'that if that villain——' he was turning round, but was stayed firmly.

'Hear me one moment first, and again I implore you to have for *them* what mercy you can. They are already crushed to the earth. Mr. Colvin, we have already had bad news, appalling news. You find us here assembled at the instance of our trusted and valued bank manager—I tell you this in strict confidence, in strictest confidence—to have laid before us proofs of the unexampled treachery and infamy of our junior partner.'

'Treachery? Infamy? But I can believe it, can well believe it.'

'He has swindled, cheated, robbed us. It has been one long course of deception and fraud. Mr. Macmillan, with whom we were closeted when you came in, had his suspicions aroused at last by the magnitude of Mr. William Farrell's audacity, and summoned us at the very first moment possible, but——' and he shook his head meaningly.

'Too late?'

'Too late. He has got off. Got off with his booty. We may be able—I trust we shall be able to keep this a secret from the world, but at present it is impossible to say more. We cannot yet estimate our personal losses. One thing, however, I must beg you to understand—you are giving me your attention?—this is a matter of vital importance—that what you are now in possession of goes no farther. No one outside this door must know anything. We shall be the only sufferers; I repeat, we shall be the only sufferers. And now, my poor young friend,' with a change of tone, 'you have heard my story, tell me *yours*.'

'Mine is—a very short one.' Lionel Colvin was quiet now, and though a minute before ready to cry aloud to all who would hear, could scarcely find utterance for the broken syllables trembling on his lips.

Twenty-four hours had elapsed since the communication described in our last chapter had furnished to his mind sufficient evidence of the part played by Bet's quondam admirer in her disappearance, but he had been unwilling to leave the spot without



obtaining, if possible, some corroborative testimony, or at any rate some conclusive proof of his informant's veracity.

He had got neither. All that he could learn was that a gentleman, one of many, unremarkable in any way, had stayed at the principal hotel on the previous Tuesday night and had left early; but where he had come from or where he had gone to was unknown. This much indeed had been ascertained at the very first inquiry, and further pressure elicited no more. A cunning urchin could easily invent a tale to tickle the ear, the ear being already on the stretch. It ended in its truth or falsehood mainly hanging on the testimony of a bit of silver paper.

Lionel had however resolved to delay no longer, and to avoid publicity the brother and sister had crossed to the mainland on the next morning by the very boat which had conveyed the fugitives the week before. It may be mentioned that they had not waited till now to make inquiries of the captain and crew, but no one could remember any passengers deserving of attention.

'It's no use beating about the bush longer,' he turned to Poll with burning eyes at last. 'There is only one way to get at the truth.' She was too frightened to ask him what that way was when she was left alone at an hotel and saw him hurry from the door.

. . . . .

'And now, sir, you know all.'

Stephen Farrell nodded, his hand still heavily pressing the young man's shoulder.

'Can you wonder that I——?'

'I wonder at nothing.'

'You can give me no hopes, no possibility of hope?'

'I cannot. We will, of course, aid you by every means in our power,' continued Stephen, in a mechanical tone. 'On our own account we are about to—but oh, my poor boy, my poor boy——'

'Thanks . . . Don't . . . Please don't . . . You're awfully good, I—of course, I—isn't it time I went now?' He thought he was holding his hat and gloves, he thought he was speaking, and some one was answering, and the clock was striking, and what was he doing there in the parlour of Farrell's bank with three Farrell men? 'Ho there, a glass of water,' said Stephen, loudly. 'Quick, sharp. Brandy, if you've got it.'

Then some one was holding a tumbler to his lips, and he did not want it, and was trying to evade it. And why was the window open? And how cold the air blew upon his forehead!

'He was very nearly off,' said Stephen, aside. 'I just caught him in time. Poor fellow, he was no weight, mere skin and bone. I expect he has neither eaten nor drunk since. Damn that black-guard!'

'I am afraid I am intruding.' Now Lionel was on his feet again, thinking he was speaking with dignified restraint and courtesy—he might have been drinking, so thick and guttural were his accents—'You will pardon me,' said poor Lionel, bowing.

They could never think afterwards of that travesty of stateliness without a shudder, so pitiful, so gruesome was it.

Stephen Farrell passed his hand within the young man's arm. Lionel gently eased himself of it. He wished to stand alone.

'Our carriage is in waiting;' it was Charles, the thick-head, who next put forth his little venture, 'if Mr. Colvin——?'

'No, thank you,' quickly. 'No, no.' The carriage *he* might have sat in? It was tainted, polluted. 'I appreciate your—your——' for the life of him the departing visitor could not think what it was he appreciated, but was vaguely conscious of a combined murmur in response, and of being closed in upon—barricaded, as it were; he must get out.

But he must do it properly, as a gentleman should. He must not put himself on a level with these men, and be hob-nobbing with them over their misfortune. He was sorry for them, very sorry for them—but their name was accursed in his ears.

'I think Mr. Thomas wishes to say something.' Stephen had withdrawn the brothers for a moment, and the three heads had met. ('There can't be a doubt of it; he has abducted the Colvin girl, the eldest. Of course, he couldn't marry her, as we thought he was going to do. The other business explains all that. She'd have had him up for bigamy on the nail; though I dare say she gave him rope enough as long as he kept clear of that. Thomas, you must say a word—say what you can,' and the speaker, Stephen, led Thomas back.)

Thomas was tottering like an old man, and what to say he knew not. His own bewildering grief well-nigh stupefied him, and Lionel looked formidable, unapproachable. 'May God help us both, sir—may God help us both!' he quavered.

'Well, perhaps it did as well as anything else,' reflected Stephen, patronisingly.

---

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

'THIS IS THE END.'

LIONEL had now another errand to perform, and the same afternoon saw him on his way to King's Beacon.

If anything could have added to his present wretchedness it was the sight of the scenes so lately traversed under such different auspices, for by this very train he and Georgie had travelled down, and all was so like outwardly, so changed inwardly. It was one long mockery and torture.

The same cheerful guard accosted him; he had chatted with the man on the former occasion. This day was bright as that had been; he had noted this and that pleasant scene in its autumn colouring—the tints were still gayer now. There was the pretty hamlet with its ivied church, and the school-children at play on the common; there the canal with its plodding boat, the blue smoke ascending from its funnel, the bargemen grouping over their tea. There was the lock with its small white cottage, and the lock-keeper's wife taking in her clothes from the drying-line. There was the ploughboy on the long brown sloping field to the right, and the horses pausing ere they turned, while John Ploughman wiped his brow and took breath, looking up at the passing train. Even the rooks that flew and fluttered over the furrows were the same rooks to which Georgie had called his attention.

What had she said about them? He could not remember.

Georgie had prattled most of the way, breaking out into little joyous comments and ejaculations about nothing; and he had thought her an excellent companion, and been ready to look and listen, and give his opinion gravely on the most trivial and comical of frivolities.

He had agreed with her that a journey was wasted if one did not look about and see things; it was stupid to be buried in a book. True, he was a reader and she was not, but he smiled to himself as she spoke; her thoughts could have been more easily diverted into another channel than his at the moment.

Had he been selfish in his happiness? Perhaps. It was no use thinking about that now. Was he to blame for—for anything? This was quite possible; he was a dull fellow and an easy victim.

But what he had now to do needed no wits, and he supposed he should go through with it all right. His return ticket

was in his pocket; he must have been quite clear in his mind, quite acute and provident when taking it. He kept repeating to himself the hour at which the return train started. It would unfortunately interfere with the dinner hour at King's Beacon, but Lady Blanche was so kind she would—would not—what would she? He could not imagine what it was that Lady Blanche would, or would not do.

Of course he would not make a fool of himself. What he had to say must be said in so many words, but he had already got them by heart, and there would be no possibility of their meaning being mistaken.

How long would Georgie take to get ready? He could give her an hour; more than an hour in reality, but he would say an hour. It would be better for all concerned. He would probably not see Leonora after—after his interview.

It was four o'clock when the train drew up at a small wayside station which Lionel recognised as the one preceding his own stopping-place, and the compartment emptied itself of all his fellow-travellers at this point.

He was mechanically assisting them to dismount, as indifferent to their departure as to their places being refilled, when, with a start, indifference vanished, for it was Lord Umfreville who brushed past, and hastily ensconced himself in the opposite corner.

That he did not perceive his nephew was obvious, and the latter's first impulse was to pass out before the door shut, and find an asylum elsewhere for the remaining half-hour of his journey. He had actually risen to do so, when a second thought made him resume his seat. It was necessary that he should meet Lord Umfreville.

'Hollo? You?' The tone was precisely what might have been expected, also the frown which accompanied it.

Lionel looked his relative in the face. 'How are you?'

To his own surprise he spoke with the utmost politeness.

'So you are back here again? Thought you had left these parts,' growled his lordship. 'Going to King's Beacon, I suppose? Haven't they had enough of you at King's Beacon yet? That young cub told me you left about a week ago, but I suppose you couldn't keep away. Where ladies are concerned—'

Lionel left his place, and seated himself opposite the speaker.

'My dear uncle' ('What on earth?' muttered the uncle, for the accents fell like milk and honey on his ear, and withal had a

strange artificiality about them.) 'will you kindly give me a few moments of your time, and may I ask you to dismiss from your mind all thoughts of King's Beacon and its inmates? Although I am going to King's Beacon, the business which takes me there has nothing to do with them, and we need not bring their names into this conversation.'

'Need not bring their names into this conversation?' mimicking. 'Oh, very well—very well, I'm sure. It is to be a "conversation," is it? You'll excuse my saying so, but you and I do not as a rule do much in the conversation line, so I am sure I am most happy if it pleases you—only one thing before you begin,' with a hasty thought; 'if it's anything you are going to ask of me, Lionel, you may save your breath. If it's money, I'm a poor man, poorer than you—for my position. If it's influence, I haven't got what would cover a threepenny bit. If it's——'

'I am not going to ask anything of you, uncle.'

Uncle? The last word nipped the retort on the sarcastic lips; instead Lord Umfreville, muttering something about 'young relatives' and the 'head of the house always expected to provide for them,' pulled up his collar and eyed his nephew a shade more civilly.

The civility and the hostility were alike thrown away. A mortal wound makes a man indifferent to prick or salve.

'Well?' A trifle of curiosity moved the speaker at last. 'It does not seem to me we shall have much time for our "conversation," nephew,' observed he, drily, 'if we take so long to start it. We are spinning along——'

'I know,' Lionel held up his hand. 'But I think,' said he, slowly, 'that when you hear what I have to tell, you will excuse a momentary reluctance. Sir, my mother was your sister. You cast her off, did you not? I have gathered so, though I never asked nor wish to know why. I ask now; you need not be afraid to tell me.'

'Is that all?' a low laugh. Then the lips remained parted; for a moment the family skeleton fancied he was about to have the door shut in his face, but he was mistaken. 'Since you *ask* me,' said Lord Umfreville with emphasis; 'and I presume you wish for the truth in reply, your mother disgraced her family both before her marriage and after it. She was a notorious——'

'I understand.'

'Mind, I shouldn't have told you. There's no need to rake up old stories. A woman who puts her family to shame ought never

to be named among them, and the only thing for you and your sisters to do is to forget that she ever lived, if you can. Even if she had lived, she would have been, or she ought to have been dead to you. There! I'm sorry to say it,' shortly—not unkindly.

'There is,' said Lionel, speaking as if in a dream, 'a new member of the family whose name must never be mentioned henceforth. Sir, I have got to tell it—you have got to hear it. Had I not met you now, I should have forced myself to your door to gain a hearing. My sister is—my mother's daughter.'

He rose and threw open the window.

It seemed to him that some one was speaking, swearing, moving about behind him, but he would not turn until he had a full command of himself. Then 'If this could have been concealed,' said he between his teeth, while abruptly regaining his seat, 'you can believe you would have been just the last to hear it. If there had been any hope, any chance——'

'Which is it?' abruptly. 'The one here?' jerking his thumb over his shoulder.

'No.'

'The one Lady Blanche raves about—the beauty?'

'Yes.'

Lord Umfreville drew a long breath and sat silent. It was the one tribute he could pay to the agony upon the brow before him.

Suddenly he ejaculated 'Lionel.'

Lionel nodded.

'I'm not a fellow of much feeling,' said Lord Umfreville, very truly, 'but there *are* things. I was just your age, Lionel, when *she* did it. I don't know how I felt then. I think'—a furtive glance—'I know now. You won't care, perhaps, for my sympathy, but such as it is you have it.' He waited another minute, then burst forth—'Tell me what you please, and as much as you please. You've no father; p'raps I might have thought of that sometimes; I'm the nearest relative you have in the world, and if you like to remember me *as* that, I'll not forget it on my part. You were right to say I ought to know; of course I ought to know. Blood is blood, and it's from us she's got hers, curse her——'

Lionel started forward. A hand was laid on his knee.

'I ask your forgiveness,' said Lord Umfreville, humbly. 'Before God, Lionel, I will not say that again. And it was not *your* sister but *mine* I was thinking of. These women, they bring us low, and then expect us to go through the world sim-

pering and smirking like themselves. Not one of them but would——'

'Uncle, I beg you, I entreat you——'

'You are right, Lionel. Sir, you bear it like a man. Allow me to say that you bear it as a man of our family should. The men among us were straight—fairly straight; not worse than others, at any rate; and if our women—— But I'll hold my tongue. Yes, sir, out of respect to *you*, I'll hold my tongue.' Drawing nearer he lowered his voice: 'Tell me about it, Lionel.'

By the time the train began to slow down next, all had been told.

'And you are returning to-night?' said Lord Umfreville, thoughtfully. 'Of course. It is the only thing you can do. You could not stay there.' ('The scoundrel has spoilt your chances in that quarter,' to himself.) 'The only thing would be—— Look here, why not come to Ughtred? Now, my dear fellow,' proceeded he, in persuasive accents, 'let us look at this matter from the same point of view, as a family matter—a purely family matter. From under my roof, the roof of your ancestors, you and yours could present to the world a fair front——'

'We have no right to present a fair front.'

'We have no need to lie down and be kicked. We can at least hang together. Oh, you are thinking if we had hung together in the past this blackguardly trick might never have been played? Quite so. I won't say that you have not cause for the reproach. The poor thing was at the mercy of—but there are the others to be thought of. Bring them with you to Ughtred, and let us at least show—— What, you won't?' for he read resolution in the mournful negative. 'Well,' after a pause, 'I won't press it. Not at present. But if the time should come when you need some one to stand by you—some one of the name—myself——'

'Thank you, uncle.'

'He'll never do it, though,' muttered the uncle, looking after him.

Presently he drove past Lionel on foot. Should he, or should he not, offer a lift? It would be out of his way, but, moved by an unusual impulse, he was about to draw up, when he suddenly flung himself into his seat again. He perceived that the walk was undertaken from choice, not from necessity. It was, in short, a breathing space.

. . . . .



'But still they might have written—I do think they might have written,' wailed poor Georgie, who had dragged through the weary day, waiting for the afternoon post. 'They never missed before; and even if there is nothing to say, it's better to know there *is* nothing. Oh, Lady Blanche, do you think—do you think there is any hope?'

'I think, dear Georgie, there may be some—change.'

Lady Blanche hesitated a little. She, too, had been surprised at receiving no tidings of any sort from Freshwater that day. In her own mind she apprehended their worst fears realised and the lifeless remains found.

'If they don't write to-morrow,' sobbed poor Georgie (she did not notice that Leonora had come near, quickly touched her aunt and whispered to her), 'what shall we do if they don't write to-morrow?'

('Yes, get her away quickly,' replied Lady Blanche, aside.)

'It is not very kind of Lionel,' continued the poor girl, sinking to a fretful intonation; 'it's so hard not to know anything——'

'Georgie, dear,' interposed Leonora's soft voice, 'some one—some visitor—is coming up to the door; shall you and I escape?'

An arm was round her and she was being carried off ere she knew; and it did not occur to her that visitors had not been admitted during the past week, and would certainly not be shown up straight into Lady Blanche's presence now.

Lady Blanche put her hands before her eyes while awaiting this one. She felt all that Leonora's whisper meant. Lionel was at the door? Without a hint of warning. Come himself rather than send the sad news by letter, no doubt; come to break it to his poor young sister and to them all. She must be prepared not to add to his grief by her own. She must be composed. She drew a little shawl around her, and folded her arms within it. Hark! He was at the door.

'Dear Lionel, I am afraid this bodes no good! We saw you coming. I sent the girls away——'

She drew him forward, both hands in hers.

'Oh, did you?' said he. 'Yes, I—I understand. But I have not long to wait. How soon can she be ready?'

'My dear Lionel, what are you talking about?' uneasily. Was he—was he not quite himself?

'The train goes at seven forty-five, Lady Blanche. Perhaps, as time presses, Georgie had better be told.'

'But you must first tell me,' said Lady Blanche, with gentle

persistence. 'Oh, my poor boy, my poor boy, I fear I know what you have to tell!'

'You know?' His voice was still thick, almost inarticulate. 'You know?'

'You have found her, Lionel?' tremulously.

A spasm passed over his face.

'Would to God I had!'

Lady Blanche was silent. What, then, could it be?

'You did not see the words of the telegram which summoned me from here,' said he, suddenly straightening himself and calling to mind his part, for he had thought out this opening carefully; 'they were "Bet is lost." I can only repeat them now.'

'Lionel!—But I do not understand,' faintly.

He perceived nevertheless that he had struck the first blow, and, without giving himself time to think, recapitulated his lesson rapidly, gathering force and lucidity as he proceeded.

And now for an outburst, a cry of horror and reprobation. He was ready for it.

'The poor, innocent babe,' murmured Lady Blanche, sinking into a chair. 'Oh, my poor, darling, innocent Bet——'

'Not "innocent,"' interrupted he, sternly.

'What?' she was on her feet in a moment. 'What? You? Her brother, her own and only brother? You? Your father's son? For shame, for shame! I say the child *is* innocent. I say she is as pure as I am—oh, my Bet, my little Bet, why did I not see? Fool that I was and blind! I might have shielded you—oh, Lionel, why—*why* was I not told? But this is no time for blame; only I say before God, and I will say before all the world, that child never knew what she was doing.'

His eyes were slowly enlarging. 'You believe this?'

'Do you dare to disbelieve it? Again I say "For shame," Lionel. Have I to teach you to think of a true, trustful—alas! too trustful, nature? I tell you the child never dreamt of evil; it was not in her. She has been beguiled by falsehood—who can tell how plausibly devised? Anything would do. He had captured her affections, and Bet is one who gives wholly when she gives at all. From the message left for Poll,' proceeded Lady Blanche, not allowing a response, 'it seems to me absolutely certain that Bet had no thought of harm befalling her. She expected to clear up the mystery of her departure within a few hours. Does that point to guilt? Of course she thought she was going to marry him, and how do we know that she has not?—yes, I see what you

would say,' correcting herself, 'in this case word would have come; but there is an explanation of this: he dares not let her send it for fear of betraying his whereabouts to his defrauded brothers. Sad as it is to have to hope for such a thing, dear Lionel, our darling is, I doubt not, this man's wife——'

'Oh, Lady Blanche, if I could but hope it!'

'Can you not?'

'I can't. I will tell you all. It may be as you say—it *may* be—but when I went to the bank this morning, and spoke there of a clandestine and disgraceful marriage as what I believed to have taken place—it seemed a terrible thing enough to have a sister cast in her lot with that of a scoundrel flying from justice,' his hands clenched the support on which he leaned, 'the brothers—the partners—maintained an ominous silence; they were keeping something back from me. They knew, by some means or other, I feel convinced they knew that there had been no—contemplation of—marriage.'

'Still I say that Bet is innocent,' but her cheek whitened perceptibly. 'Whatever has befallen your sister, your own sister, your own little fatherless and motherless sister——'

'Lady Blanche, have pity.'

She turned her face from him and he his from her.

'Is nothing to be done?' she whispered, at last.

'*They* are doing what they can. They will not prosecute, but it is a matter of the first importance that the defaulter should be found and induced to give certain information. That done, they will let him go, stipulating that he never sets foot in this country again. So much I learned this morning.'

There was a long pause, and Lady Blanche knew what was coming.

'I have one word more to say,' said Lionel, in an altered tone. 'Thank you, may God bless you for all your great goodness to me—I am not now speaking for any one but myself—in the past. Already everything connected with my happiness in this house has resolved itself into "the past." Lady Blanche, you do not, you cannot misunderstand me; nor will—she? The shame that has befallen our house——' his voice died away, and again he turned his head aside.

Lady Blanche crept to his elbow. 'Dear Lionel—dear Lionel'—the tears were streaming over her cheeks—'I will tell Leonora.'

He grasped her hand. 'May she know,' he muttered brokenly, 'just this, that I did—once—love her?'

'Did once?' A fragment of a gleam upon the speaker's brow. 'Oh, if she were my child, this should never separate you. What have *you* done? And why should your happiness and hers be blighted? But my charge is a sacred one; I must not, I dare not permit my own feelings——'

'To stand in the way of your duty,' said Lionel, steadily. 'Believe me, Lady Blanche, I never for a moment expected anything else; I should not,' he drew himself up proudly, 'have presumed upon anything else. I should not have asked of you the favour I did just now, only that we had better not meet again——'

'Yes, perhaps,' said she, faintly.

'And so, if she may——?'

'I will tell her. Dear Lionel, it breaks my heart to tell her, but there are—her people; she is, as you know, only a cousin's child, and was entrusted to me because it was felt that I should discharge my trust faithfully and honourably. It is terrible to have to say it, but, had her parents been living, they might not feel as I do about this. They were strict in their notions——'

'As I am,' said he. 'It humbles me that you should think this explanation necessary. Surely you did not suppose——'

'Nothing. It was to myself I spoke. I have to keep down my rebellious longings. Oh, Lionel, I had so hoped, so hoped—you know what your father was to me?' she cried in a passion of the moment.

He bent his head.

'His son should have been as my son. It was a new life opening before me—selfish creature that I am to recall this at such a moment to wound you——'

'No, it heals me; I am glad to know it, glad to think it. But we ought to hurry now,' he looked at his watch. 'Can Georgie come, and her things follow her? I have left Poll alone at a London hotel; she has had a miserable time, and I should not have left her there if I had known anything else to do with her; but I promised we should join her to-night. Besides——' he paused, and she understood what the pause meant, 'this is the end,' he said, and looked towards the door.

It opened as he spoke.

'No, no,' said Lady Blanche, hastily moving forward to prevent intrusion; 'I am engaged, let no one in,' as a footman appeared in the doorway with a card on a salver, 'go and say so,

Thomas ; and, Thomas, the carriage—a close carriage—at once, to go to the station. At once,' peremptorily.

'My lady, the gentleman desired——'

'Do as I tell you.' But mechanically she took the card and looked at it. "'Mr. Sydney Umfreville"—oh, another time, but I am engaged to-day——'

'The gentleman asked for Mr. Colvin, my lady.'

'For Mr. Colvin? How did he know Mr. Colvin was here? But it does not signify; you would not?' turning to Lionel, 'of course not. Mr. Colvin is on the point of leaving, and has no time.' Aside to him: 'Kindly meant perhaps, but——'

'The gentleman was very particular, my lady; said he knew Mr. Colvin was pressed for time, but I was to say——'

'Who is it?' said Lionel, coming forward.

'Your cousin,' said Lady Blanche, in a lower voice; 'your uncle must have told him,' for she had heard of the meeting, 'and he wishes to show sympathy——'

'Said he *must* see Mr. Colvin.' Stolid Thomas held to his point, having been pecuniarily impressed. 'The gentleman is in the library, sir.'

With a look at Lady Blanche, which she interpreted as one of resignation to the inevitable, Lionel stepped into the passage. 'Let me be told as soon as the carriage is there,' he directed the servant as he passed along, indifferent to anything which might now befall him. The visit might be ill-timed, but of its good intention there could be no doubt, and he schooled himself to behave decently.

'I say, I think I've got some good news for you.'

So unexpected was the greeting which awaited our unfortunate young man that he stood absolutely still, and confronted the speaker with dazed eyes and twitching lip. 'I'm awfully sorry, you know, and all that; but I do believe I know something that will help a bit,' eagerly. 'I came off the moment I heard. You're listening, aren't you? You know who I am, don't you? We haven't met for ages, but I'm your cousin Sydney, and I'm stopping at Ughtred——'

'Yes.'

'You know? Well, look here, Lionel; I shouldn't have thought of bothering you, if I hadn't been absolutely sure that I have good news. Can you understand?' ('Poor fellow!' under his breath.)

'Very kind,' muttered Lionel, mechanically.

'You can't take it in? But listen. I was in Liverpool a week ago—this day week—last Wednesday—the day your—your—the day the *Majestic* sailed for New York. I saw them—*them*, you know—and she's not gone with him—she's—not—gone with him,' breathlessly.

'*What?*' There was no question of inattention or lack of comprehension now. He was keen as a panther on the track. He shook from head to foot. 'Say that again; for God's sake, say that again!' he cried hoarsely, the drops starting on his brow.

'I'll say it, and swear to it. Of course I knew nothing at the time, but I was on the platform of the wharfside station when the special came in. I had noticed a fellow standing about, because for some time we were the only two there, and he engaged a cab and paid the man beforehand, saying he would want him to do his fastest, so as to go somewhere and be back before the *Majestic* sailed. Cabby seemed impressed and looked into his hand. I thought something was up. Well, I lost sight of the other fellow in the crowd when the train came in, and forgot all about it; but as the passengers moved off and the platform cleared, I came upon him with *two* girls all tied up together, and one of them talking very fast. Lionel, the other was—your sister.'

('That was what they knew at the bank,' thought Lionel.) He could not speak, could merely breathe and nod assent.

'There was evidently something going on,' proceeded his cousin, 'some difference of opinion. The bearded fellow——'

'He was bearded?—Ah!'

'He made a snatch at the little one, and the tall one whirled her round as if to keep her from him. She did this more than once, talking all the time. I thought he was trying to say "Good-bye" and that she was preventing him. Once I saw her shake her hand in his face and point to it. She had on a lot of rings. I said to myself, "It's the wedding-ring she's pointing to." Of course I couldn't hear what she said, but she looked a Tartar.' He paused, recollecting. 'When the platform was free from everyone else, those three were still there. Even the station porters were grinning and nudging, and they were told to go on board. Two of them went, the third was left behind.'

'They—stop—say that again, will you?'

'She was left behind upon the platform—at the instance of the woman, I should say. At any rate, the man seemed most reluctant and was driven off by her. She made him go in front. I had the curiosity to follow, and saw them on board. My own people were

not interesting, and, to tell the truth, I was rather shirking them, having done all that was required of me in that quarter; and having once begun to take an interest in the other affair, it grew more and more interesting. I should say that before I followed the departing couple, I took one or two good looks at the little girl in the brown cloak who was being rather heartlessly abandoned, as it seemed to me, after the parting. Everyone noticed her. Directly the *Majestic* was off, I was asked if she had anything to do with me—I suppose, because I was walking about near—and I was told to go to her if she had. Then we, I and the man who was talking to me, heard a cry—or a scream—or something of that sort, and we seemed to know whom it came from, and ran back, but she was not to be seen anywhere.’

Lionel drew a long breath.

‘If I could hope it was Bet!’

‘Listen, you have not heard the end; a small bag was lying upon the platform; she had let it fall, or the man had, for I believe I saw it in his hand, and I myself picked this up and took it to the cloakroom. By calling for it there, you can satisfy yourself. The initials on the bag were “E. C.”’

‘The carriage is at the door, sir.’

It was Thomas who now appeared, well pleased with himself, and feeling that he had earned his sovereign.

‘All right,’ said Mr. Umfreville, dismissing him. ‘Is my thing there, too?’ he stepped to the door to call the above after the retreating figure.

When he turned, he felt ashamed to be where he was. For there was a sound in the room which is perhaps as sad a sound as can be heard by human ears, the sound of a man’s crying. Lionel had flung himself across a table, and buried his head in his arms. After one look at him his cousin turned away, and, following a second impulse, as silently left the house.

(To be concluded.)



## *The Capture of Capetown*

WITH EXTRACTS FROM AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT  
BY SIR JOHN MALCOLM.

**H**ISTORY repeats itself'—more especially in South Africa. That is the text upon which an instructive sermon might be preached by the aid of the old manuscript which lies before me—a faded, stained, and tattered manuscript, dated 1795, and endorsed in a trembling hand, 'Account of Cape Colony, by my son John.' 'Son John' was no less a person than Sir John Malcolm, soldier, diplomatist, and administrator, the biographer of Clive, the political historian of India, and, proudest title of all, 'Lord Wellesley's factotum at Calcutta.' His manuscript is written in a fine, copper-plate hand, and the style is admirably terse and lucid, but the spelling is somewhat erratic even for that tolerant period the eighteenth century. This little weakness may be accounted for by the fact that the writer began his military career at the early age of twelve, without previously passing any competitive examination.

The fourth son of George Malcolm of Burnfoot, Dumfriesshire, John was born in 1769. His father, having a patriarchal family of ten sons and seven daughters to provide for, tried to improve his fortunes by speculation, and ended—the story is a familiar one—by losing all he possessed. When the crash came helping hands were held out by friends of the family, and berths were found for several of the elder boys. A nomination to a cadetship in the East India Company's service was offered to John, then not quite twelve years old. It was feared that he was too young to be accepted by the authorities. However, he was taken to the India House, and was in a fair way to be rejected on account of his age and size, when one of the directors asked, 'Why, my little man, what would *you* do if you were to meet Hyder Ali?' 'Cut aff his heid,' was the laconic reply. The little Scotchman's language

was so much taller than himself that it won his case. 'You'll do,' said the director. 'Let him pass.'

After twelve years' service at Madras young Malcolm was invalided home in 1794. In the spring of the following year he was appointed aide-de-camp to General Alured Clarke, and on May 17 sailed with his chief for the East. Their ship formed part of a considerable squadron of East Indiamen which sailed with sealed orders; and it was an open secret that the troops on board were likely to have the monotony of the long sea-voyage varied in a rather unusual manner. The squadron anchored in Simon's Bay on September 4, having made a rapid passage out; and the manuscript above described opens abruptly with an account of the landing of the troops and military stores. Even in these days every reader is not perfectly familiar with the history of South Africa, therefore it may be as well briefly to recapitulate the circumstances that led to our attack upon Capetown at a time when we were supposed to be the friends and allies of the Dutch. On February 1, 1793, France had declared war against England and the Netherlands. A French army at once advanced to the Dutch frontier, and a considerable English force under the Duke of York was despatched to assist our friend the Stadtholder. From the first, things went badly for the Netherlands, and it was feared that the French would next attack the Dutch dependencies, of which Cape Colony was in the most defenceless position. The nominal Governor, Van der Graafe, had been recalled, and the Commissioner-General, Abraham Sluysken, was practically at the head of affairs. At this time the burghers were deeply incensed against the Government on account of the existing system of imposts and monopolies; the Dutch East India Company was insolvent; an incessant war was being waged with the Bushmen on the frontiers; and the small garrison of Capetown was chiefly composed of foreign mercenaries, who could only be depended upon to support the party which offered the best pay.

It was clear that the Colony could not defend itself; and at first Great Britain turned a deaf ear to all appeals for help. However, the series of disasters in the Netherlands, the overthrow of the Stadtholder's government, and the report that the South African burghers were inclined to change sides and join the French, induced England to send out a small expedition under Admiral Sir George Elphinstone (afterwards Lord Keith) and General Craig in the early part of 1795. Upon their arrival in Simon's Bay in June, the commanders wrote to the Council of

Cape Colony, stating that they had brought a mandate signed by the Prince of Orange, then a fugitive in England, ordering the Governor to admit British troops into the fort, and to consider them as the forces of a friendly Power sent to protect the Colony against the French until such time as it would be possible to restore it to its lawful owner. The Council found themselves placed in an awkward dilemma. They knew that the mandate had no official force, having been signed by the Prince alone, who was a fugitive in a foreign country. No newspapers had reached them for several months, and they knew nothing of what had been happening in the mother-country except what the English chose to tell them—namely, that the Netherlands had fallen into the hands of the French without terms of capitulation. The commanders suppressed the facts that the democratic party had given the French an enthusiastic welcome, and that the national government had been remodelled.

In the circumstances the Council felt that the best thing they could do was to temporise. They offered to supply provisions to the English fleet as long as it remained in the bay, and promised to ask for help should they be attacked by the French. A little later, in spite of the strict blockade kept by the British, a Dutch ship got in with newspapers containing a notice issued by the States-General, absolving all persons in the Netherlands and their dependencies from their oath of allegiance to the Prince of Orange, and stating that the Stadtholderate had been abolished and an independent republic established. On receipt of this news the Council decided that it was their obvious duty to prevent the English from obtaining possession, temporary or otherwise, of the Colony. Early in August, a British picket having been fired upon near Simonstown, hostilities began. The Dutch camp at Muizenberg on the road to Capetown was bombarded and captured, the burghers falling back upon Wyndberg. Craig, having only sixteen hundred men and not a single field-gun, was too weak to advance upon Capetown, and his position at Muizenberg was for a short period extremely critical. However, in the nick of time thirteen East Indiamen sailed into the bay, bringing three thousand troops under the command of General Clarke. On September 9 the Council were warned that unless they surrendered their town in accordance with the favourable terms already offered, possession would be taken by violent means. To this ultimatum Sluysken replied that his oath required him to defend the Colony for its lawful owner.

John Malcolm's manuscript begins, as has been said, with an account of the arrival of the squadron in Simon's Bay on September 4. Three-fourths of it have not appeared in print before, but the first few pages were quoted by Kaye in his *Life of Sir John Malcolm* (1856), and may therefore be briefly summarised. The troops were rapidly landed, and marched to Muizenberg, where they were anxiously awaited by Craig's little force, who had lost all hopes of succeeding without these reinforcements. The chief difficulty was the transport of provisions to camp, these having to be carried from the boats on the soldiers' backs. Thanks chiefly to the zeal and decision of the admiral, the force was enabled to march on Capetown on September 14, taking with them four days' provisions, and leaving eight days' provisions at Muizenberg. The army consisted of five thousand men, made up of infantry, artillery, bluejackets, and marines, and having twelve six-pounders and two howitzers. They had not advanced more than five hundred yards before they were harassed by small parties of burghers, mounted on active little horses, and carrying with them a long gun, presumably an eighteenth-century Long Tom. 'They appeared to have no Discipline,' says Malcolm, whose orthography I have not ventured to correct, 'and any person who had seen irregular Cavalry must have instantly supposed them to be a very contemptible enemy. These Burghers were the farmers of the Country, who were by far the most violent party against any terms being entered into with us. Unaccustomed to fire at anything but Roebucks and Ostriches till our arrival, they were eager to try their hands at new Game, as they used scoffingly to term our Troops. They had met with petty successes against the advanced party of General Craig's little army, whose prudent conduct in not advancing against Capetown till General Clarke's arrival, they readily construed into a fear of their Prowess.'

Although the ground was particularly favourable for their methods of warfare, being studded with sandhills and intersected with deep lagoons, the burghers were intimidated by the steady advance of the British, and fled from height to height, keeping up an irregular fire, seldom nearer than a quarter of a mile. The ground presently opened out into a level plain, and across this the enemy fell back upon the little Wyndberg, where a party of infantry with nine field-pieces had taken up a strong position. The high road ran through the centre of their line, though it would have been possible, as Malcolm afterwards discovered, to

have found 'a way round' out of reach of their cannon. The British halted in the plain for their second column under Colonel Campbell, which had been much detained for want of proper guides, but at 4 P.M. the combined attack began. One detachment of eight hundred was ordered to turn the enemy's left flank, and one of six hundred to turn their right, while the remainder advanced to attack in front. Confused by the well-directed fire of the British gunners, and alarmed by the appearance of the parties upon their flanks, the burghers very soon abandoned their position, but, '*having excellent Cattle, they easily drew off their Guns.*' Does not this read like a quotation from yesterday's paper?

As it was now dark a halt was called, and the men were ordered to lie on their arms till morning. 'The Casualties of the day had been very trifling,' says Malcolm, 'particularly considering the great noise that had been made, one man killed, and about twenty wounded.' Evidently, then as now, the bark of the Boer guns was much worse than their bite. The fugitives took the news of their defeat into Capetown, and at ten o'clock the same night a flag came from Governor Sluysken, and a truce of forty-eight hours was requested. One of twenty-four hours was granted, and next morning General Craig met the commissioners halfway between the town and the camp, when the terms of capitulation were agreed upon, and the fort taken possession of in the name of his Britannic Majesty. The burghers apparently objected as strongly to street fighting and the accompanying destruction of property as do their descendants at the present day, the capitulation of Capetown being as sudden and complete as that of Johannesburg or Pretoria. There were, however, divided councils in the enemy's camp. The Scotch commander-in-chief of the Dutch army, Colonel Gordon, was supposed to be in favour of a British occupation, while Van Baalen, who had been in command the previous day at Wyndberg, was alleged to have drawn up his forces in such a faulty position that they were practically certain of defeat. The burghers, declaring that they were betrayed and sold, dispersed and returned to their farms, thus rendering any further defence of the Colony impossible, whatever the intentions of the Government may have been. The terms of capitulation provided for the surrender of the Dutch troops as prisoners of war, while the colonists were to retain all their existing rights, including the existing form of religion. Everything belonging to the East India Company was to be

handed over to the British commanders, but otherwise all property was to be respected.

Malcolm declares that nothing could have been more fortunate than the termination of this affair, since 'had the original terms offered by Sir G. Elphinstone and General Craig been accepted, our Commanders would have been tied down to the invidious task of supporting a system of Government deservedly odious to all classes, and the divided authority of the civil Government under the Prince of Orange, and the Military under his Britannick Majesty would have proved a continual source of Discord, Jealousy, and Recrimination.' The writer expresses his satisfaction that the Dutch had not, by an infatuated resistance, obliged the English to attack the town, since in that case the consequences would have been dreadful. 'Our Success would have been certain, and no power could have restrained an army composed like ours of wild Sailors, and raw (I may almost say undisciplined) Soldiers from Carnage and plunder.' As soon as he was in possession of the town, General Clarke, who appears to have been the 'Bobs' of his own day, began to try by every means in his power to quiet the minds of the inhabitants, conciliate their affections, and reconcile them to the change of government. His efforts met with apparent success, for in a few days order was restored, the women who had fled to the country at the beginning of hostilities returned, and 'even the most violent Burghers, allured by the prospect of gain, began to bring in their Cattle. Every man followed his former occupation, and a Stranger would not have believed any change had happened.'

Kaye quoted no further from the manuscript account than the foregoing passage in his *Life of Sir John Malcolm*, and all further extracts are now printed for the first time. 'The Commanders,' proceeds the writer, 'not chusing to place any Confidence in the affection and Loyalty of our new subjects, who had almost all taken the oath of allegiance to the King of Great Britain, very wisely determined to leave all the Regiments in Garrison at the Cape, and to abandon all thoughts of prosecuting the Expedition any farther. The whole of the Military did not amount to more than three thousand effective men, a force hardly sufficient to defend the Cape against a French Invasion, on the Supposition that the Inhabitants were well-inclined, which there was good reason to suspect they were not, particularly those in the Country where French principles had made wide progress; but of this hereafter. The money in the Treasury was very



trifling. Military stores and Cannon in great abundance, and stores of Corn to an immense amount were found, and many other articles of value.'

Malcolm observes that no occurrence worthy of mention happened during his two months' stay at the Cape, except the tragic death of Colonel Gordon. 'That officer was the son of General Gordon of the Scotch Brigade in the Dutch service, an officer well known in Europe. The Colonel was appointed Commander-in-chief of the Dutch Troops at the Cape twenty years ago, and had a Regiment of his own who chiefly composed the Garrison of that place. His attachment to the English nation was strong and avowed, and whether from his public character or from private correspondence I know not, thus far is certain, great hopes were formed of his either publicly or privately aiding us in getting possession of the Cape for the Stadtholder, whose part it was imagined he would take against the Republic. This hope proved ill-founded, yet he was not free of the suspicion of being well-inclined towards us, particularly among the lower classes, and in his own Regiment. His supineness during the period that Hostilities were actually carrying on, when he certainly neglected all his official duties, and his having recommended the acceptance of the first offers of Sir George and General Craig, rendered him still more suspected. These circumstances occasioned his being very grossly insulted by the men of his own Regiment the day they lay down their arms. On the morning of the 25th of October he put an end to his existence with a pistol, being no longer able to endure the disgrace he conceived he had fallen into with both parties.

'Colonel Gordon was a man remarkable for his humanity and Philanthropy. He was a Traveler, an Antiquarian and a natural Philosopher. Botany was latterly his favourite study. He travelled farther inland from the Cape than any European had ever done. As he committed his observations on every subject to paper, his MSS., which are in his Widow's possession, are probably valuable. His wavering conduct at a period when, whatever party he had chosen, he ought to have acted with resolution, may be deem'd the original cause of his unfortunate end. He had long deservedly held the first and most respectable rank in the society in which he lived. He thought he was degraded, and could not support the reflection. I have also heard that the stream of his Domestic Joys was poisoned. If so, it is not to be wondered at that a mind, whose powers were weakened by illness,



should fall under such accumulated misfortunes. He was buried privately, but his Corps was attended to the Grave by near forty English officers.' Theal, in his *History of South Africa*, states that Colonel Gordon was so bitterly disappointed at finding that the government was to be carried on in the name of the King of England, without reference to the Prince of Orange, that he died by his own hand.

Malcolm gives an interesting summary of his observations on the climate, soil, productions, and inhabitants of the Cape. In his day, as in ours, the climate was healthy, the summers oppressively hot, and the soil sandy. 'I was informed,' he remarks, 'by a Gentleman who went upwards of one hundred miles inland that after he had travelled one day's Journey, nothing new met his eye, as a general sameness prevailed. The Plantations were in common eleven or twelve miles from each other, and the intermediate space was a Barren Waste.' There is no mention of the mineral treasures, gold mines and diamond mines, with which the name of South Africa is now so inseparably connected. At that time the only portions of the country explored by Europeans were, besides Cape Colony, the western coast belt as far north as Wallfisch Bay, the eastern coast belt to the Zambesi valley, and a few localities along the eastern border of the territory now known as Rhodesia. Western Rhodesia, Basutoland, and the country now included in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colonies were entirely unknown.

Malcolm was especially struck with the excellence of the Cape vines, and with the variety and profusion of the flowers. 'On the side of one of their Bleak Mountains,' he writes, 'you may cull a Nosegay superior in the Scent and Beauty of its flowers to one selected from every Garden in England. The profusion with which the hand of Nature has scattered them, apparently in the most ungenial situations, prevents the Inhabitants from attending to them so much in Gardens, as they might be disposed to do were they more rare.' Capetown he describes as the cleanest and most regularly well-built town he has ever seen, affirming that there is not a mean house in it. 'The number of Dutch Inhabitants at the Colony,' he continues, 'may be computed, men, women and children, at 8,000—of slaves of different descriptions, 20,000. Few of the Inhabitants are very wealthy; most of them are comfortable. They partake of course of the character of the Country from which they are derived. The men are rather heavy, but in general good-humoured and friendly.

Few of them are remarkable for their abilities, and few are very ignorant. They appear unambitious of a great character, but desirous to show they have not a low one. They are fonder of eating than drinking, and are almost without exception incessant smokers.

‘The Ladies, particularly of the better Class, are in general, when they are young, good-looking—many of them handsome—as they get older they in common grow more lusty than exactly suits a fastidious English Eye. They are almost all well-educated, and some of them accomplished in Music, Dancing etc. If they do not arrive at the elegance of the European Fair Ones, they are much seldomer found wanting in a modest and becoming Deportment.’ This passage may be compared with a published letter from Malcolm to his sister in which he says, ‘The Frows were some of them very pretty, and appeared more lovely when their modest decent manners were contrasted with the ridiculous extravagance both in dress and manners, of some young ladies escaped from a London seminary on their flight to India to lead the fashions there, whose behaviour made me blush for them.’

After describing the housewifely virtues of the Dutch ladies, he proceeds: ‘The Society at the Cape is too much of a sober and sedate nature to please the palate of an Englishman, habituated to gayer Circles and to more Dissipated parties. It certainly wants life, and is rendered listless by its sameness. There is no place of public Entertainment, and Dances are very unfrequent. The only amusement is visiting, and being visited. . . . The Clergy have the appearance of being unassuming good men. The Farmers in the Country are in general Boorish, both in their manners and appearance, but are kind and hospitable to strangers. They, as well as the Inhabitants of the Town, are very religious.

‘The Slaves appear in general happy, and I believe with a few exceptions are well-treated. There are numbers of Malays at the Cape, who are, like all their countrymen, remarkable for their spirit of Revenge, ungovernable rage, and Desperate Fury, which often occasions their running “*ahmuck*,” a phrase well-known in the East. In such cases they Dishevel their Hair, tear their Clothes, and dart into the most frequented streets with a dagger in their hands, and kill all whom they meet indiscriminately, till they are put to death themselves. A most remarkable circumstance of this kind happened here some years ago. A young Prince of Eighteen had been taken in Rebellion at Batavia against

the Dutch. He was sent by the Government in chains to the Cape, where he was at first employed as a working slave, and latterly was made one of the Fiscal's men, an Employment at which he showed the pointed abhorrence, from being obliged to act the part of an Executioner. He meditated a desperate revenge on his Enemies. It was concluded he first meant to sacrifice the Governor, as immediately after dark one evening he stabbed both the Centries at his gate to the heart. He was however, by the alarm, prevented from getting at the Governor. He immediately ran towards the principal streets. The night was very dark, and it was some time before the alarm spread; when it did all was in Consternation, every Family barring their doors, and fearing for the fate of those who were about. Soldiers were sent in different directions to try and apprehend him, but in vain. They found only those whom he had killed and wounded. When morn appeared, a most tragical sight was exhibited. He had killed and wounded seventeen. Those who were murdered were related to the best families in the town. A French Captain of a Trading vessel, remarkable for his strength and courage, went from a friend's house to go to his lodging after the alarm had spread. The friend wished him to take a sword, but he derided the idea, and shewing a stick, said he would flog the Boy if he came near him. His Body was found next day among the rest covered with wounds, and with every appearance of his having made a most violent struggle. What added to the general alarm was that the murderer was nowhere to be found. They dreaded his being concealed to make another Massacre. He had taken Refuge among the Rocks, and was perceived by a man who lived at the verge of the Town, coming down next evening to repeat the scene. The man, taking a Loaded Musquet in his hand, advanced towards him. When he thought his aim was certain, he fired and wounded him mortally. He was however, before he died, carried with lights at ten o'clock at night to the place of Execution, where he was deprived of the little life he had left on the wheel. He was tall and handsome in his person, and appeared of a humane, gentle disposition, and was particularly fond of children, with whom he used often to play.'

The Government of Cape Colony previous to the arrival of the British had consisted of a President and council of nineteen, though latterly almost the sole authority had been vested in the Commissioner-General, Abraham Sluysken. Good order was maintained in the town by the Fiscal, who had under him a

considerable number of constables, and was empowered to take up rioters and other disorderly persons and punish them in a very summary manner. 'Almost all the Inhabitants of any respectability,' observes Malcolm, 'were in the Company's Service. All those whom the Governor favoured were employed as Contractors, others as Book-keepers or writers in the various offices, where business was carried on in a wonderfully minute and exact manner. Monopolies in other Countries are partial. Here every Article of trade, as well as the commonest articles of life, were Monopolized by the Dutch Company. They also supplied the Inhabitants with the Productions of Europe. The Company was not enriched by this ill-judged Policy, but their servants, thro' whose hands the property passed, amassed Fortunes.

'The Parties among themselves at the period of our arrival ran very high. French principles had been very generally disseminated, particularly in the Country, where the ignorant Farmers were wrought up to a Frenzy by two or three designing men. They talked of nothing but establishing their Independence as a Republick, making Capetown a free Port, being as they termed it, the friends of all nations but the slaves of none. They spoke of imitating the Glorious examples set them in Europe. These sentiments prevailed so much that they superceded in reality of power the established Government. The Governor was obliged to act as the Burghers directed, and in my opinion, had we not arrived, he would have been deprived of his office, if not of his life. A List prescribing near One Hundred of the first Inhabitants, including him and all his adherents, had been made out, and they were to have been put to death had the party prevailed. This spirit is far from being iradicated. On the contrary, the futile and contemptible opposition which they made to us, has joined a spirit of Revenge to it, and were a French Invasion to take place, they would be soon openly joined by almost all the Inhabitants in the Country, and secretly aided by many in the Town.'

The average annual revenue of the Colony, translated into pounds sterling, amounted to about 30,000*l.*, and Malcolm enumerates the various imposts and monopolies from which it was raised. It is evident that during his short stay he gave a good deal of thought and attention to the affairs of the country and its future prospects, for his manuscript concludes with a short view of the measures that had already been adopted by the British with regard to the conquered colony, and of those which

should be adopted if we were to retain possession of it after peace was restored.

'The Commanders at the Cape,' he observes, 'acted with the greatest prudence on gaining possession of it. They studied by every means in their power to conciliate the minds of the Inhabitants; convinced that the establishing of any new system of Government requires mature deliberation and cautious conduct, the regulations they made were merely temporary. They were content with giving the machine motion; to make it turn with vigour they left to others who had more time, and were more accustomed to such Tasks. The Cape, while we retain such a communication as we have at present with India, must be of great value to us for two reasons. In the first place, it furnishes in profusion every refreshment for our Ships; and in the second, we might suffer severely from its situation were it in the hands of a Powerful Enemy. It becomes our first policy to render it as prosperous as possible. This is only to be done by encouraging its trade and cultivation, and by finding an Export for its productions, Corn and Wine. If we keep the Cape after the War is over, its future prosperity will become of course a subject of serious consideration. I shall offer a few crude observations on what I consider would tend to that desirable end.

'Commissioners should be sent to settle its laws, and to give it a Government on as Economical principles as possible. This Government, except the immediate heads of Departments, to consist of natives of the Cape. All subordinate offices to be exclusively held by them. This measure is indispensibly necessary, if it is meant they should forget they are a conquered people, and become attached Loyal subjects . . . The greatest consideration would be to find an Export trade for their Corn, Wine, etc. etc. When a Peace takes place, a good deal would be sent to the French Islands; of their better wines a considerable quantity would find a Market in India, where its cheapness would secure its sale, and in return they would bring Coarse Cloths, Suggars, Tobacco, Coffee, Teas. Supplies of all kinds might be sent to Botany Bay, which is not a voyage of more than six or eight weeks, and at the same time that the Cape was benefited, a considerable saving to our Government would take place. I am not of opinion that a trade of any consequence could be established with the Brazil Coast. The Jealousy of the Portugese would be an insuperable barrier to this. They would fear the smuggling of Indian Goods. Taxes ought, if laid on, to be done with great

caution, particularly on Exports. You check the spirit of Adventure which alone can make the place prosperous. Imported luxuries might be Taxed, and I think higher duties laid on wine, particularly on that of an Inferior quality, which is consumed at the Cape. The Tithe on Corn amounts to a trifling sum, and is a most unpopular Tax with that Body of men who ought to be most encouraged. It ought to be struck off, and a small Tax on Imported Goods made in its lieu, by which the same set of men would pay double the money, though in an indirect manner, without complaining.'

With these remarks, in which may be recognised the germs of the policy of the future Indian administrator, the manuscript concludes. In a published letter to his sister, written towards the end of his stay at the Cape, Malcolm says, 'I have got an honourable but troublesome employment in recruiting men out of the prisoners of war for the service of the Company in India. A set of finer fellows I never knew—all Germans. I have been very successful.' The young aide-de-camp was exceedingly happy in his chief, whom he describes as one of the best men he ever knew, 'mild and gentlemanly in manners, clear and just in his own conduct, and a declared foe to all dark dealings and speculation. He never will, I am convinced, make an indirect halfpenny. . . . He carries on a good-humoured war with my negligent habits, and my desire to please him makes me endeavour to conquer them. I never was a swearer, but I can venture to say that I never now, even in an unguarded moment, let slip an oath.' This testimony to General Clarke's character is worth noting, as he seems to have been badly treated in connection with the distribution of the booty captured during the campaign at the Cape. On November 15, 1795, Malcolm sailed with his chief for Madras, where we must take leave of him at the beginning of the most brilliant period of his career. General Craig was left in command of the garrison at the Cape, which was ruled by British governors until the Peace of Amiens in 1802, when it was restored to Holland. On the renewal of the war in 1806, it was again captured by the British under Sir David Baird, and has ever since remained in our possession, though it was not finally ceded to us by the Netherlands till the peace of 1815.

GEORGE PASTON.



## *Hallows' E'en.*

**A** WAKE, arise, you dead men all—dead women, waken you!  
 The hunter's moon is in the sky—her cruse of frosty dew  
 Earth empties; throw your covers off of grave-grass rank and  
     green,  
 This is the dead men's holiday, 'tis Hallows' E'en.

The mother with her buried child falls into tender play,  
 The baby at her shrouded breast sucks soft and sleeps away;  
 The lover dead twelve years ago seeks out his buried dear  
 That put her broken heart to sleep but yesteryear.

'Behold, my love, my hair is black, your bonny hair is white;  
 How come my darling's eyes so dim?' 'With weeping many a  
     night,  
 With sewing many a weary day through years that knew not  
     you;  
 But I have done with rosemary and bitter rue.

'My garland of dry rosemary hangs where I used to pray;  
 My garden with its tansy flowers runs wild for many a day;  
 The box-plants that I tended well the passing children pull,  
 The green leaves strew the way they go, slow-foot, to school.

'And I have done with lessons now, have said my task all  
     through,  
 And I may rest at last, sweetheart, as once I played, with you.'  
 He kisses her, he blesses her, he strokes her faded hair—  
 She never was so dear to him when she was fair.



Brother and sister parted long by bitter words and blind,  
Forget the years of severed ways with old love in their mind.  
The beggar that of hunger died, the girl that died of shame,  
Are playing with dead children here some childish game.

Husband and wife forget the wrong that kept their souls apart,  
Hand lies in hand as tenderly as heart beats upon heart.  
This is the day for buried love to see as it is seen ;  
This is the dead men's holiday—All Hallows' E'en.

NORA HOPPER.

## *Carpe Diem.*

HE had fallen asleep while the sun was yet fierce with the drowsing afternoon; and, though it was now nearly eight o'clock, he still lay with his head on his arm, breathing peacefully, and unconscious of the cloud of midges that fluttered their jerky dance about his face. In one of his hands was clasped a pipe of well-coloured briar; and, face downwards, by his side, lay a book half hidden in the grass.

Presently a ray of sunset, level and red, broke through the leaves of the brier-bush, under which the sleeper was sheltering, and fell, like a broad sword of flame, full across his face. He rolled over drowsily, stretched out the hand that held the pipe, and brought it sharply against a spiny tendril hanging near. The pain aroused him and he sat up, opening grey eyes with the shadows of sleep and dreams yet in them.

'Hullo!' he said aloud, 'I've been asleep, have I? And for how long, I wonder!' He pulled his watch from the breast-pocket of his shabby Norfolk jacket and looked at it with surprise. 'Whew! eight o'clock, by Jove! Time to make tracks.'

He rose, pocketed the book, and, lighting his pipe, looked around him.

'What's become of Aleck?' he said, scanning closely the small clearing shut in on all sides by bright-leaved oaks and darker brushwood. 'Been rabbit-hunting, and fallen a victim to the keepers?'

A series of sharp whistles caused a yapping fox-terrier to burst through the undergrowth at a run and to come up alert and sharp-eared. 'Time to be off,' the young man said to the dog; 'I hope you've spent a more profitable afternoon than I have. You've not been asleep, at any rate, that I'll wager.'

Turning, he entered a narrow footpath among the trees, Aleck scouting eagerly in advance among the grass and bushes. Overhead, where the branches were thin enough to allow it to be seen, the sky was a fathomless main of turquoise pillowing slow clouds

of shell-like pink. Hardly a breath of wind stirred the leaves on the boughs or set a-tremble the tall grasses and flowers by the path side. From somewhere far away came the garrulous evening clamour of rooks.

He walked slowly, for the hour suited his mood and he had no cause to hurry. By the time he was free of the wood the sun had set; and he halted a minute to look over the sloping sweep of meadow and parkland to the horizon-line of coppice standing out black against the clear burning of the west. Then he bent his steps across a field of grass still uncut and reaching to his knees, through a creaking turnstile, and along a path skirted on one side by a high hedge starred with dog-roses.

He had pursued this path for some distance when he came to a white gate across which a girl was leaning struggling with the rusty latch. The clank of the iron recalled his attention from thoughts which had wandered far enough away. He looked up, and, with a start of evident recognition, paused. She had her back half turned towards him, and the recalcitrant latch was occupying her so intently that she was utterly unconscious that anyone was near. For a second he regarded her hesitatingly, then turned sharply to his right and struck off across the meadow with the apparent end of avoiding a meeting.

But if such was his intention it was doomed to failure, for Aleck, unknowing of reserve, no sooner beheld the figure at the gate than he bounded towards it with many noisy signals of recognition and delight.

The girl turned, startled at the sudden sounds. For a few yards the other held on his way; then, muttering something between his teeth, swung round and retraced his steps. She was stooping down in acknowledgment of Aleck's welcome and only looked up when he was quite near.

'Why, Mr. Brampton,' she said with a frank laugh, 'I didn't expect to find you out this evening. I thought Aleck was on a private foray, after father's rabbits probably.'

He raised his hat.

'I didn't expect to meet you either,' he said with some awkwardness. 'I thought you weren't to come to the Hall till after your—till the end of July.'

'Well, now we've met you can do me one favour at least. I'd been struggling with that horrid dirty latch for ever so long; and was just thinking I'd have to forget I was grown up, and vault the gate, when I saw you.'

He bent over the gate without a word while she stood by rubbing the dust and rust-stains from her fingers with a dainty handkerchief of lace. He accomplished the task at length, and held the gate open for her to pass through into the dusty lane.

'Thanks ever so much,' she said as she paused a minute. 'I don't know what I should have done if it hadn't been for you. Have you been here all the summer?'

'Yes, so much of it as we've had.'

'How dull!' She laughed, tilting her big straw hat back from her brow.

'It's been anything but dull,' he said, speaking more to himself than to her.

'How odd! I always find the country intolerable in summer. Well, "*De gustibus non disputandum*," as you scholars say. And you're a poet and rave over the birds and flowers and so forth. Give me the parks.'

'And yet you come down here!'

'Only from last night to the day after to-morrow, and only to get some things I wanted. I'm all alone at the Hall with my maid, like a princess in the Castle of Enchantment.'

'And the prince?'

'I left him in London;' then turning on him sharply: 'Why, Mr. Brampton, you never congratulated me!'

'A thousand apologies! I'm a rustic and a boor. I do congratulate you, though, from the bottom of my heart, and him too. Sir Lyon Lorraine is the happiest of men.'

She bowed, laughing.

'He says so now, and I shall endeavour to keep up the illusion. But I fully expected you would have written. You ought to have sent me a *pièce d'occasion*. You must write me an ode in your next book. Is it odes that you write? I never could read your verses, you remember.'

'Yes, I remember;' then, leaving the gate against which he had been leaning: 'Mayn't I have the pleasure of seeing you home? It is growing dark.'

'Thanks, I should be so glad. It's dreadfully silly, I know, but I'm always so frightened in these dark lanes at night. Are you sure you don't mind?'

'I and Aleck are entirely at your service, Miss Laud.'

'Why Miss Laud?' she asked as they began to walk. 'Six months ago it was always Rose.'

'You never call me anything but Mr. Brampton.'

'That's out of respect. You are years older than I am.'

'Fourteen, to be exact.'

'Thirty-five, then, and I'm twenty-one. I always have looked on you as a kind of uncle. You've been grown up ever since I can remember you, when you came here first with your mother.'

'It is a difference. How old is Sir Lyon Lorraine?'

'To be frank'—with a laugh—'I never liked to ask him. I did ask his aunt, Lady Berkshire; but I don't think she quite liked it. She said rather huffily that he was quite a young man still. I suppose he is over forty.'

'And is he a kind of uncle too?'

'Certainly not! He is a rich man, and rich men never grow old: he is an ambassador too. Can you fancy me as Mrs. Ambassador?'

'I think the Embassy will be very fortunate.'

'I wish you wouldn't pay compliments. They don't suit you. You haven't the grand manner. Why can't you be natural, as you were in the old days when I wasn't anything but—when I wasn't Miss Laud?'

'I am preparing for the coming change. You are not to be Miss Laud long. You are engaged.'

'Yes; but not to you. It needn't make us stiff and shy of each other. I had looked forward to meeting you, and being with some one who wasn't my *fiancé*.'

'You find him so difficult?'

'Oh, no; of course he's charming. But I haven't known him very long. And then he always wants to talk sentiment. Middle-aged men always do.'

'But I am middle-aged.'

'Yes; but you write your sentiment instead of talking it. You have never been sentimental to me.'

'Never?' He threw more meaning into the word than he had intended, and flushed with vexation that he had not left her unanswered.

'Oh, yes; once I remember. I thought you had forgotten. It is two years ago.'

'Two years last month.'

'What a memory! You were very foolish on that occasion. You let your poetry get into your conversation. I laughed at you, do you remember? You were not serious.'

'Not in the least, of course.' His tone was dry and curt.

'You were not serious.' She repeated her words sharply.

'You couldn't have meant it. Why, I was little more than a child. You did not mean it, Mr. Brampton?'

She paused at a spot where two lime-trees made a black pool of darkness on the twilight road. He did not reply for a moment, and then said shortly :

'It was for you to decide.'

'And you go on caring?'

'To the end, I suppose.'

She burst out with a hearty laugh of amusement, a laugh that rouladed a thousand sounds of silver on to the resting air.

'To the end!' she echoed mockingly, and then a fresh peal cut short her utterance.

Brampton stood in silence, biting his lower lip. At last he could endure it no longer and said, almost roughly :

'I am glad the idea amuses you. I have realised its humour myself at times. I should apologise for having said these things. I have not the grand manner, as you say, and doubtless Sir Lyon Lorraine——'

'Has never said anything so charming to me since first I knew him. At forty, one is more troubled about the eternity of one's life than of one's feelings. No, it is only you who could talk of loving to the end, and loving poor little me too, who never had an emotion of more than five minutes' duration. It is only in the country that one could talk of life-long passions. Sir Lyon has lived all his days in cities, and loved in every fashion from crinolines to tailor-made gowns.'

'You don't love this man, Rose?'

'He has ten thousand a year and a splendid position. He is talented and talked about. Can you doubt the sincerity of my affection?'

'You are not serious.'

'In what I say—yes, certainly. I respect and admire him; I am full of gratitude for the honour he does me.'

'And love?'

'You are a poet. You write about such things. Tell me, what is love?'

'I could have shown you once.'

She laughed again.

'And how, pray? You really are irresistible. Do you picture me in the little cottage, tending roses in a sun-bonnet and listening in rapture to your latest sonnet—me, who haven't a brain in my head, and who know nothing except how to spend money? How miserable we should both be!'

'I could have made you a future. I'm not a fool.'

'Yes, and reproached me in five years with having made you lower your art. You are not a fool—no, you are worse than that—an idealist.'

'You at least are my ideal.'

'And a charming one. I'm pretty, I know, and lively, and young, but all that wouldn't be enough for you. When you see me in ten years, with the blush gone from my skin and the silver threads in my hair, you will thank me for having preserved you from myself.'

'And that is how you think we men care?'

'That is how you will know you cared when a few years are gone.'

'That you should preach this to me!'

'Is perfectly natural. I have lived in town, among men and women; and you have lived with the fields and your books and Aleck.' Then, changing her tone to one more serious: 'Ah! don't think me utterly frivolous. Forget about me, or think of me only as the child who heard and laughed and didn't understand.'

'And what of the woman who heard and understood and laughed all the same?'

'She only lasts a moment. You told me once of some dull philosopher who said that all things flow away and nothing remains. We are like that—laughing to-day and crying to-morrow, never the same.' She paused a moment, and then said in a matter-of-fact way:

'It is growing late, Mr. Brampton. I will not trouble you to come any further. I shall be at the lodge-gates in a moment, and will risk the bogies for that time. Good-night.'

She held out her hand, and then turned and ran off fleetly—a shadow in the shadows, but a shadow whose footsteps were accompanied by a thrill of fresh laughter, mocking and penetrant.

The sun had made good progress through a cloudless June sky before Eustace Brampton awoke on the following morning. For a little while he lay still, conning over the scene of the previous night in all its details, and experiencing a feeling of considerable irritation. 'Heavens, what a piece of folly!' he said to himself moodily as he began the operation of his toilette. 'To think I should have blurted out that old story all over again! So much for the self-command I thought I had trained myself to!'



He breakfasted at a table drawn up to the open window of the small sitting-room, with its bachelor furniture of books, pipes, and disorderly writing materials, and sat on smoking and watching the white and orange butterflies that trifled with the flowers in the garden, where hollyhocks, roses, and pinks grew in untended confusion, and what had been a lawn presented the appearance of a miniature hay-field.

'I think we'll take ourselves off for the day, doggie,' he said presently to Aleck, who sat by his side. 'If we loaf about here, the chances are we shall meet a certain lady, and then our feelings may lead us to forget our manners again. Shall we walk over to the Priory Ponds? You can worry waterfowl and I can play at fishing, and to-morrow, with her departure, we shall be free to wander again where fancy inviteth.'

He crossed the room, and through the inner door shouted directions to his one servant, a deaf old crone of sixty, to pack him some luncheon; then he took a rod from a rack on the wall, hunted a dusty creel from out of a lumbered corner, and slipped a book from the table into his pocket. In five minutes his preparations were complete and he was sauntering down the lane towards the woods.

His project, however, of escaping a meeting with his companion of the evening before was fated to frustration, for ere he reached the shelter of the trees he perceived her coming in face of him up the lane. She was walking briskly, and carried in one hand a great bunch of wild flowers, dog-roses, ragged robins, and the mealy blooms of the elder-tree.

For a second he was tempted to beat a hasty retreat; then, considering that, at so short a distance, he must be seen and recognised, he threw up his head and walked on defiantly. She greeted him with a smile and a glance of brown eyes from under the big straw hat.

'Out for the day, Mr. Poet?' she asked lightly and without a trace of shyness. 'Going to whisper to the daisies and listen to the birds?'

He nodded.

'You got back to the Hall in safety?'

'Quite, thanks to your kind escort. It was pitch dark in the avenue and I ran all the way.'

'And laughed all the way too?'

'No; I soon stopped laughing,' shaking her head gravely. 'I didn't want to laugh at all; but there are cases when one must

choose between laughter and tears, and laughter doesn't give one red eyes.'

'It is the better attitude to take towards life for many reasons. I fancy Sir Lyon will prefer a wife who deals in smiles.'

'Oh, Sir Lyon'—with a disdainful shrug of the shoulders—'I had forgotten all about him! Why do you remind me? It is too fine and warm to think of marriage and serious things. I like the country in the morning; it is only the stillness and shadows of evening that make me afraid. It is too grand then, too solemn—like being in a great grey cathedral; it bores me.' Then, touching the rod he carried, 'Are you going fishing?'

'At the Priory Ponds.'

'Do you remember when you used to take me over there and row me about in the leaky old boat?'

'Yes—great days those.'

'What fun if you could take me again, to-day!'

She spoke lightly enough, but the faintest eddy of colour passed over her face, and she looked at him in an expectation of reply that was not quite indifferent.

Was she natural? he wondered; had she forgotten last night's talk? or was she a mere coquette anxious to make essay of her power over him, to prove the strength of her net's meshes?

'I wish I could.'

'And why not?'

'The conventions must be considered. You are a grown-up nowadays and engaged to be married. It would not do for you to be seen roaming the country with a ragamuffin like me.'

'Nobody need know. I'm all alone at the Hall. The servants will think I've walked over to some of the neighbours, if they think at all; and I always believe that servants have far too much on hand among themselves to trouble about their masters. The Priory Ponds are always deserted. We should meet no one.'

He shook his head with a smile.

'It is the last time.'

She spoke very low and in a voice that was almost one of entreaty. A mad longing sprang up in Brampton's heart to assent; but he set it aside and answered almost rudely:

'You are talking of impossibilities, you know, Miss Laud. It is out of the question.'

'Oh, quite so.' She turned her back. 'It is impossible, as you say. I hope you will have good sport, Mr. Brampton. Good-bye. I leave for London to-morrow.'

Did a tremor in her voice belie the indifference of her words, or did his ears play him false? She had turned away. He thought he saw her shoulders move in a manner that spoke of an emotion it cost her an effort to control.

In a second he was at her side.

'Of course I was only laughing,' he said, laying a hand on her arm. 'Of course you can come. It can't matter a bit. We shall meet no one; and, even if we do, we are old enough friends to take a day's tramp together, and for the world to think no harm. You forgive me? You meant what you said? You will come?'

She looked at him laughingly out of eyes none the less bright for a suspicion of tears risen perilously near shedding.

'You really want me?'

'I always want you.'

'You won't after to-day. A few hours of my society will cure you of that, and you will wish you had been alone with your pipe and book.'

'Wait and see.'

He spoke joyously. Granted that she were a coquette, and were merely following a coquette's caprice, he loved her none the less. This one day of her was suddenly grown a great thing to him. He was jealous of its fleet minutes already, resolved to live it to its full, and not to look beyond.

She turned now and began to walk by his side, talking volubly. For a few minutes he felt awkward—at a loss, then fell into her mood, and chattered as lightly as she.

In the shade of the trees, through the thick bracken and long grass, she moved like the chequered sunlight that danced there, now stooping to pick a flower, now halting to laugh at Aleck's yelping rushes at imaginary game in the brushwood. The place was alive with the music of birds.

He had on previous occasions found the walk to the Priory Ponds a tedious one. To-day he counted grudgingly every step of the way, and gave a sigh as they passed out of the wood and stood looking down at the two large sheets of water that lay below them still and blue in the dancing air and breathless heat of noon.

They made their way down to the dilapidated boat-house, and found the old boat with the oars inside her. A few minutes' baling was all that was needful to render her as seaworthy as ever, and they rowed lazily out into the lake.

'Just like old times,' the girl said with a sigh of pleasure as

she lay back in the bows, facing Brampton, her lap full of the flowers she had gathered by the way, which she now began idly arranging.

He looked at her in silence. Was it a dream? He asked himself the question again and again, as he listened to the plash of the oars and the thrill of a lark, a song lost in the sky's blue deepness. Was it a dream? Yes, but a day dream, thank Heaven! and no mere delight of fancy caught at 'twixt sleep and waking.

She talked as they floated on and she arranged her nosegay; now of old times when she had been a child, and he a lad fresh from Oxford. She recalled his mother, dead these seven years, who had felt almost a mother's love for the daughter of the widowed squire. Then, with a change of mood, she broke out with a laugh and an anecdote of some prank half-forgotten, or some humour her shrewd girl's wit had noted during three London seasons.

She insisted on taking an oar presently, and he sat watching the sway of her shapely shoulders, and her firm lips set hard over the effort. By the time they reached the middle of the lake it was long after noon, and they rifled the creel of its luncheon, laughing over the humble fare of bread and cheese and the appetites that made it disappear so rapidly. Then they lay back at stern and bow, and watched lazily the red and green float that rested annoyingly still on the sunny water. Fishing proved but little to her fancy, and he was content to row her over to a bed of water-lilies, queenlike on their thrones of dark leaves; and they leaned over to pluck them, the boat swaying, and causing her now and then to give a little scream of pretended fear.

If it could only last for ever! The idea came to him repeatedly, and every time he shook it off as tending to mar the moment's ineffable sweetness. She, for her part, seemed to have no thought save for the present; and it was at his suggestion that, at length, they obeyed the warning of the declining sun, and turned the boat's head shoreward.

She sprang on to the bank and waited for him to hand her the flowers.

'What an armful!' she said, pressing their cool blossoms, already beginning to fade, against her cheek. 'And what a wild bouquet it is too! But nicer than the cut flowers and orchids the London dandies bring one, with prettily cut-and-dried speeches and stiff little bows.'

He moored the boat, and then came to her side as she stood looking over the water.

'What a splendid day!' she said; 'and the last of them too. In three months I shall be "My Lady;" and then good-bye to anything but conventions! If one goes boating in those days it will be with smart women, who are afraid of wetting their skirts or showing their ankles, and the little dandies whose backs are broken after half an hour in a canoe.'

She turned away, a grave expression on her face, and they began the ascent of the gradual slope, with its flaming gorse bushes, that led towards the wood and the homeward road.

For some time they went on in silence. The hush of evening seemed to exercise a spell over the girl's spirits. She looked down pensively at her flowers, touching them lightly with her lips now and then. Brampton's heart was too full of feeling to admit of his making conversation.

'How quickly they fade!' she said softly at last. Even the great strong lilies begin to look tired and wilted. To-morrow they'll be as dead as to-day.'

'Yes, to-day,' he said in a voice that all his efforts could not keep quite steady: 'my day!'

'Your day!'—she repeated his words twice; then very low: 'I meant you should have it.'

'Then it wasn't a chance that I met you this morning?'

They had passed out of the woods now, and stood in the soft orange of the afterglow, facing each other.

'To be frank, no,' she said, fingering her flowers nervously and looking down. 'You think I have no heart, Mr. Brampton; I know I am trivial and worldly enough; but I felt what you said to me last night. It came to me as a shock, a great surprise; and I laughed partly because I didn't quite believe you, and partly because I was afraid to do anything else. I felt afterwards that I had been cruel; and I was coming to make friends. We do part friends, don't we?' She held out her hand. He caught it, and, encouraged by the gentleness of her words, began the appeal that had lain at his lips all day. For a minute or two she heard him quietly, a dreamy expression in her eyes and half-parted lips. Then she interrupted him with almost a cry, freeing her hand violently from his.

'Don't ask it! Don't ask it!' she said beseechingly. 'It isn't in me to give it you. You think so now, and, to-day,' her voice breaking with a sob, 'I—I thought so, too, for an hour. But it's only a dream, a dream we should both wake from. I couldn't live the life, and you'd find me weak and shallow in the end.'

She paused a minute, made a great effort after calmness, and said: 'It's best as it is. You've had your day; don't ask for more; don't, if you—you love me as you say you do!'

He drew near her again, his arms outstretched, words of incoherent entreaty on his lips, but she pushed him back gently.

'Let me go now,' she said simply; 'I can't change, nor can you; but think of me always as I've been to-day. Forget that I've laughed, or seemed not to care; forget——'

She broke off suddenly, and, stooping, began to pick a long spray of bramble from the hem of her skirt. He knelt to aid her, his mouth parched and dry, his heart stunning him with its own sound.

His hat had fallen off, and as he knelt bare-headed the girl bowed down to him, tremulous-lipped, dim-eyed. He looked up at her in silent wonder.

For a space she hesitated; then suddenly drooped her head and kissed him full on the brow.

'I gave you your day, remember! It was all I could give,' she said, and, turning quickly, ran from him across the meadow and through the gate that opened on the pathway to the Hall.

ARTHUR F. BELL.

## *A Study in School Jokes.*

THE position of a teacher is no sinecure, least of all when correcting examination papers. It is a task upon which he must concentrate all his powers, for his judgment will be accepted as final, and much depends upon it. Burdened with a heavy sense of responsibility, he begins with a careful reconsideration of the questions set, and decides on a standard of marking. After correcting half a dozen papers, he concludes, very reluctantly, that it is too lenient or too severe, and must be altered. He starts again, laboriously weighing the merits of each answer. This one shows knowledge, but is it sufficiently to the point? That one is correct as far as it goes, but does it go far enough to receive full marks? A third answer is rather vague, but not wrong. What is it worth? The gist of a fourth lies as 'two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff,' but their slender value must be estimated. He reads and re-reads, he compares answer with answer and paper with paper, until his powers of subtle discrimination are nearly exhausted. After an hour or two of this severe concentration his head grows hot. He would put the remaining papers away to finish at another time, but he has fairly got the hang of his work now, and, dreading what it would cost him to recover his carefully adjusted standard of marking, he plods on. Having at length reached the last paper, he is disturbed by an uncomfortable fear that one candidate—he has no idea which—was given a mark less than another for some point equally well brought out. He tries to argue down the feeling, but after some palavering has to give in. Another weary search through the tortured pile convinces him that there was no mistake after all. It is the last straw! Human endurance can no more. With a buzzing head and a deep-breathed vow that he will never again be the dupe of a morbid conscience, he rises from his seat a mental and moral wreck!

It is indeed a brain-racking process; I know of none more so.



But, like all other trials incidental to 'the noblest profession in the world,' it has its noble compensations; and there is one, the most obvious, if not the most valuable, which often lies hidden leaven-like in the doughy substance of the examiner's task.

I mean the unconscious humour, the ingenious guesses, the surprising anachronisms, the unbridled imagination revealed by the youthful brain under the cruel pressure of examination. These are so astonishing that unless a man have a soul above a joke, or an uncommonly dull set of papers, he will probably smile over his work at least as often as he groans.

As for the unfortunate being who devotes himself to the delicate and laborious art of teaching unequipped with a saving sense of humour, of him it must be said that no man has more woefully mistaken his vocation. Unconscious of his deficiency—perhaps even because of it—he will do his duty with care and complacency; but his pupils, not knowing what they lack, yet feel that 'shades of the prison-house' follow darkly in his train as he enters the class-room. No gleam, no sparkle, nothing to lighten the heavy fare he presents for their absorption; and when he goes he leaves behind him a feeling of mental indigestion both painful and unnatural.

Nevertheless, the teacher is the chief loser. The crushed spirits of his small victims will raise themselves at his exit like blades of grass after the garden-roller has passed over them; but he, the roller, will revolve along his heavy way with never a share in the springing life he so conscientiously depresses. Truly such a man's possible sources of compensation are grievously limited.

But to return to the subject in hand. I have by me a great variety of these 'school jokes,' *bonâ-fide* specimens unconsciously contributed term after term by two schools with which I have had much to do—the one a high school, attended by children of well-educated parents; the other a large school, where the pupils are drawn chiefly from the lower middle class.

I mention this because it is interesting to observe the effect of the different home-surroundings in the sort of mistakes made by these two classes of children. For example, the illiterate homes of the lower class are responsible for many anachronisms, which are the evident result of a very limited range of thought and reading; while in the mistakes of the higher-class child one can often find evidence of a wider and more varied field of ideas—so varied, indeed, that they become somewhat mixed sometimes, and appear on paper in very novel and surprising combinations.

I find that most of my jokes fall very naturally into one or other of five classes.

First, there are mistakes of spelling. These are, of course, the most numerous, and as a rule quite uninteresting, except as eliciting our sympathy by reminding us of our own early struggles with the unreasonable orthography of the English language. Sometimes, however, they play such astonishing pranks with the intended meaning of the writer that they are worth recording.

'The blood in the body is taken by means of tubs to the heart and there detained.'

'All alkalies have a soupy feeling.'

'A volcano is a burning mountain that has a creator and throws out melted rooks.'

'Maidstone is the centre of the pop trade.'

'I came sore and conquered.'

'Unwhacked along Clitumnus

Grazes the milk-white steer.'

'The night rat came rolling up ragged and brown.'

'His brain was teething with grand ideas in all directions.'

'If the earth did not revolt, we should always have equal nights and days.'

'Stored in some trouser-house of mighty kings.'

I have preserved the two following for the utter confusion of anyone who shall dare to deny that words of deepest wisdom may fall from the lips, or pens, of babes.

'The lungs are organs of execration.'

'The soul has two sides, a dark and a white, and it hides the white side.'

The next class of mistakes are those which are the result of unsuccessful guessing. The morality of conscious, deliberate guessing at examinations is perhaps doubtful, but I frequently find on inquiry that the perpetrators of such suspicious-looking answers wrote down what they honestly believed to be facts. And even if they confessed to being uncertain of their ground, which of us has not been guilty of the same offence under similar harassing circumstances? At any rate, the practice provides such an amusing study of youthful ingenuity, that we may easily forgive the offenders. Here are a few examples:

Q. What do you understand by the following:—Pig iron, Bristol boards, lumber trade, shoddy, insulators, buffers, lamp-black?

A. 'Pig-iron is what they make the nose rings for pigs of.'

'Bristol boards are schools where very poor children go.'

'People who keep pawnbrokers' shops are said to be in the lumber trade.'

'Shoddy is a kind of drink much used in Ireland.'

Insulators are: 1. 'Islanders.' 2. 'Machines used to freeze cream and other liquids to make ice.' 3. 'People who insult other people.'

A buffer is: 1. 'A thing that buffs.' 2. 'A hard blow.' 3. 'A wild animal.' 4. 'A kind of ox used to plough the fields in some countries.'

'Lampblack is the man who sees to the lamps.'

Q. 'How does 0 differ from the 9 other digits?'

A. '0 differs in not having a tail.'

'A schoolboard is a board put to say what things are to be done in the school.'

'A school that girls can go to. They sleep there.'

'A watershed is a shed for keeping water in.'

'The three highest mountains in Great Britain are Ben Nevis, Ben Lomond, and Ben Jonson.'

Q. 'How did William I. put down the rebellions of the English?'

A. 'He put them down in Domesday Book.'

No examination papers are more interesting to correct than those on history, Biblical or otherwise. From these I have drawn my third class of blunders—anachronisms. Apart from the amusement they afford, they are really valuable as reminding us, who sometimes forget, how difficult it is for the child-mind, 'moving about in worlds unrealised,' to grasp the idea that things were not always what they now are, especially if, as I pointed out above, very little is done at home to develop or guide the imagination. Yet it comes upon one with a slight shock to read that 'the priest of Midian reproved his daughters for not inviting Moses to come in to tea;' that 'David boarded with the Witch of Endor;' and that 'when Moses' mother laid him in the ark among the bulrushes she did not forget to give the baby its bottle.' Did babies have bottles in those days? Why not?

The following are also funny:

'When Earl Godwin came back to England all the people flocked to the station to meet him.'

'The earliest newspaper of those times was the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.'

'The Holy Place is lit up with gas, and so the priests did not have to carry the light about with them.'

'The curfew was rung at eight o'clock every night for everyone to put out their gas and fires.'

Next I class together mistakes where one can see traces of the right idea, but it has not yet taken definite form in the writer's brain, and, like the poet's dream, it suffers some distortion when forced to clothe itself in the hard garb of black and white. And here again, even if we are no poets, we can sympathise. We can remember the relentless, 'Well, if you know what you mean you can say it. Next boy!' and how 'next boy,' with a readier vocabulary, promptly gave vent to the knowledge of which our head was full, gained his mark, and set us meditating on such an apparent lapse in the justice of Providence.

Here are a few examples :

'The base of a triangle is the side which we don't talk about.'

'A triangle is sometimes regarded as standing upon a select inside, which is then called its base.'

'The apex of the heart is placed downwards and slightly upwards.'

'The Subjunctive Mood is used in a doubtful manner.'

'Rapids are pieces of water which run with great force down the middle of rivers.'

'Excommunication means that no one is to speak to some one.'

'The North and South Poles mean that if a ship comes near one and looks for the farther one she can't see it.'

'The earth is round, like a plate, but some people think it is flat. The North Pole has not been sufficiently explored to judge of that part being round.'

'A diplomat is some one who puts true things in a better (!) light, which changes them and alters their sense.'

'Polynesia is a group of small islands in the Pacific which are under the protection of the British, otherwise seem very quiet and peace-loving.'

'Evaporation means going quickly and condensation means going slowly.'

'Fiction is something which is believed in but which is nothing.'

'Fiction,' so runs a 'school joke' under my hand, 'is the imaginary power; it may be founded on fact, but not necessarily the strict truth.' I do not think I can find a better definition for

my fifth class, provided that special emphasis is laid on the 'may,' for the foundation of fact is not always obvious, though the 'imaginary' power is rampant and beyond dispute.

"Beowulf" was composed out of England and brought to it in the heads of Roman soldiers.'

'America is oblong in shape; it has a long coast-line. In it there is the United States of Canada and the Sahara Desert.'

'The cause of day and night is that the sun turns round on us at night, and we can only see the back; and in Africa and the Antipodes it is often day when it is night here. The sun turns round and leaves his back on the other side.'

'The Atlas Mountains run round Africa, followed by the Kong Mountains and others of less importance.'

'Warsaw is on the river Vistula, but it used to be on the river Pola.'

'A watershed is a thing that when the soil in part of a river stands straight up on one side and slants tremendously the other side, the water is obliged to go up the soil on one side and come slanting down the other side—that is what they call a watershed.'

'About this time the Pope turned the bull out of the church.'

'Climate is an imaginary belt of the globe parallel to the equator; it is so called by earlier geographers because the difference of these climes depends upon the inclination of the spheres.'

'The water nearest land is most salt, owing to the rivers that run into it. The water is least salt between the tropics. The real reason for the saltiness nearest land is unknown, but as the rivers run into the sea they bear on their surface earth, stones, and other soluble substances, that condense and turn to salt. The reason for the water not being so salt near the tropics is easily explained. The sun, shining down with all its force upon the land and water in the tropical regions, draws up the salt, and it condenses and evaporates.'

'A lake is a piece of water that the land has grown round.'

'Roman citizenship was a ship on which the Romans went out fishing free of charge.'

'John died soon afterwards, after eating lampreys, trying not to think of his grief. Anselm was a very good man. John asked him to be archbishop when he was ill, and he said it was like putting on his nightcap before he went to bed.'

The next I quote separately as an example of budding insular complacency, and as verifying my conviction that it is quite superfluous to seek to instil a feeling of patriotism in the youth of England. The difficulty is to make them believe that any other country is of the least importance.

‘The Armada was destroyed by a power not of man; it was defeated by English sailors in the New World.’

The Revival of Learning. ‘Colet came into France and was much surprised to see how the people were all raving on learning; they wanted to learn Greek, so that they could read some more about the ancient Britons.’

I will conclude with one by a Birmingham scholar—more local but not less sublimely egotistical.

‘Parliament is a place where they go up to London to talk about Birmingham.’

E. M. GRIFFITHS.

## *In the Name of a Woman.*

BY ARTHUR W. MARCHMONT,

AUTHOR OF 'BY RIGHT OF SWORD,' 'A DASH FOR A THRONE,' &c.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

IN FULL CRY.

THE night that followed was a memorable one in the history of Bulgaria, and, as an incident of the great event, it brought the crisis in our affairs.

It was the night in which by the machinations of the Russian agents the Prince was abducted, and at the point of the pistol was forced to sign an abdication of his throne. It is not necessary for me to write about an event which has been often enough described, nor to tell how the crowd of unpatriotic and disloyal officers led their troops to surround the Palace, ordered them to fire into it, and then breaking in forced his Highness to leave; and hurried him off to Nikopolis, making him a prisoner on board his own yacht, to be landed on Russian territory.

Exactly what led up to this crisis I do not know. My opinion is that General Kolfort's offer to maintain him on the throne on certain relaxed conditions was genuine and would have been fulfilled, but at the same time the alternative plot was already in progress, and this scheme was hastened forward on the Prince's refusal of the Russian terms.

Had our own preparations but been a couple of weeks more forward the issue would have been different; but, as it was, that *coup* set the final seal on our failure.

The event took us absolutely by surprise. I had retired for the night wondering what the morrow would bring forth, when my household were roused by a loud summons at the door. My first thought was that the General had again sent his men to arrest



me; and I was for resisting to the utmost, when it was discovered that the summons came from Zoiloff and Spernow, who had come in hot haste to bring me the great news and to confer with me as to our actions.

The perilous nature of the crisis was obvious, and my first thought was naturally for the Princess, with a deep and bitter regret that she had not done what I had urged so strongly—used the means we had to make a dash for the frontier.

Choosing half a dozen of my servants on whom I knew I could rely implicitly, we armed them fully and set out on foot for the Princess's house. The sounds of firing from the direction of the Palace reached us as we made our way through the streets, in which the people were beginning to cluster in groups drawn by curiosity and alarm, discussing in high and excited tones the meaning of the disturbance.

No one stayed or questioned us on the way to the Princess's house, but when we reached it we halted in amazement. Every window was dark, not a light showing anywhere, while the gates and doors and forecourt were thronged with armed men.

'They've captured her!' exclaimed Zoiloff, instantly. 'And we are helpless against such a crowd.'

'We must know the truth,' I said, my heart misgiving me. 'You are best known, Spernow; go forward and try to ascertain the truth, whether the Princess has been carried away, and, if so, where.'

He went at once; and then Markov stepped up to me.

'I think I can find out all. I am sure to know some of the men,' he said.

I sent him after Spernow, and stood back in the shadow to wait with such patience as I could command. My excitement and fear made me like a madman, till I felt I could almost have rushed single-handed against the troops and tried to hack my way into the house.

'This means devilish mischief, Count,' said Zoiloff in a hushed tone. 'You will be the next.'

'I care nothing for myself, but I will save her,' I said between my teeth.

Spernow came back in a few minutes.

'I can learn nothing. The men have orders to hold their tongues. But the Princess is not in the house; at least I gather that.'

'Then why the devil do they guard it?' cried Zoiloff fiercely.

'They may be waiting for orders where to go next.'

'It will be to your house, Count. You mustn't return there, but fly at once and leave us to settle this.'

'When I leave you either I shall be dead or the Princess will be safe,' I answered hotly. 'Let us wait for Markov; he is a shrewd, cunning fellow, and may find out something.'

'I am anxious about Mademoiselle Broumoff, Count,' said Spernow, eager, as I could see, to get tidings of her. I sympathised with him, as well may be understood.

'Go in quest of her at once,' I said; 'and, when you can, return to my house, and we will thresh out some plan of action. We may have news by then.'

He was off like the wind, and Zoiloff and I waited on in silence for Markov to return.

He seemed an age in coming, and I strained my eyes in trying to catch some trace of him in the crowd of moving figures that thronged the place. I gave a deep sigh of relief when at length I saw him come out of the gate, stand idly a moment glancing up and down the street, and then, as if sauntering away in obedience to the merest curiosity, cross the road to us.

'Well?' I asked eagerly.

'I have news. We had better not stay longer here, your Honour,' he whispered, and walked away, speaking rapidly as we walked. 'The Princess Christina left here some two hours ago. She is a prisoner in the hands of General Kolfort's men. She was roused by them just before midnight and compelled to enter a carriage that was in waiting, and was driven off under a strong guard, with a considerable escort of mounted men.'

'Where have they taken her?' cried Zoiloff and I, in a breath together, when he paused.

'The actual destination is not known, but the carriage started for the south road, that leading to Liublian; and one suggestion is that they will carry her to Ichtman or on to Samakovo, where there is a strong Russian detachment.'

'Do you know who was with her? Was anyone?' I asked.

'Yes; Mademoiselle Broumoff was taken from home at the same time, and I believe was in the carriage with the Princess.'

'Did you hear anything concerning the Count?' asked Zoiloff.

'I was asked if your Honour was still at liberty, and advised to look out for a new master. I shall not do that yet, sir, I hope,' he added; 'not till you tell me, at any rate.'

I liked his faithfulness in choosing such a moment to assure me of his attachment.

'It may be a dangerous service for the next few hours, Markov; but you have done excellently in this—excellently.'

We were now hastening back to my house, for I had already resolved to follow on the Princess's trail instantly; to rescue her at any hazard, and hurry her across the frontier, fighting our way, if need be, through all who challenged us. Zoiloff was with me heart and soul; and we set about the preparations with an energy almost feverish in its earnestness.

Fortunately I had a large stud of first-rate horses; and every man in the place who could be relied upon was armed to the teeth and mounted, and provided with enough rations to last through the coming day. I had taken care to provide myself with a large sum in gold, so as to be ready for any such emergency as the present; and this I took with me. We numbered nearly twenty men—all trained, vigorous, staunch fellows, and all zealous to the heart's-core in our cause.

When we were ready I took Zoiloff aside. I knew his resolute character and his fidelity to the Princess; but I knew also that his career lay in Bulgaria, and that if he were caught with me on such an enterprise the consequences to him would be worse than disastrous; and I did not wish to embroil him any further.

'Zoiloff, I am going to speak as a friend. No one can see the end of this business of ours. We may find ourselves face to face with the troops and may have to risk an encounter with them. For me it does not signify. I am an Englishman, and can scramble out of the mess somehow. For these men here there is no great danger either. Old Kolfort won't deal harshly with servants who can plead that I forced them into it. But with you it is all different. You are an officer, and to fight against the troops is an act of deadly treason—mutiny probably, punishable with Heaven knows what penalties. Now, as my friend, will you let me ask you to stay here and guard our interests in Sofia?'

He heard me impatiently, and looked at me keenly.

'Are you serious, Count?' he asked.

'Yes, my friendship——'

'Stop, please, or I may say something I should regret, Count,' he broke in bluntly. 'I should not reckon that man a friend who

would urge me to be a coward. Were you any other man, I would not brook it once; and even you will put a strain on our friendship if you breathe a word of this again. We are wasting time. Let us to horse. I have not deserved this of you, Count, and if I thought I had I'd shoot myself for a cur. Are you the only man that can love the Princess?'

'Forgive me, friend. I beg your pardon,' I cried, vastly moved by his words; and I held out my hand.

'I am no rival of yours,' he said earnestly, as he wrung it. 'But if a hair of her head be injured, I will know by whom, and if it does not go hard with him I am no man. Come, I am hot to be away.'

As we were mounted, Spornow dashed up on horseback, pale of face and wild of manner.

'Nathalie has gone, too,' he exclaimed, and I told him very briefly what we believed had occurred.

In another minute we started, riding in couples and at some distance. Quietly, until we were clear of the town, was the order I gave; then join, and forward in full cry. The firing had not entirely ceased at the Palace when we set out, and an occasional report reached us as we wended our way through the city by different streets to the point on the south road where we were to join. So much was now astir in the city that even our cavalcade caused little or no comment or surprise. Strange tidings and rumours were now on the wind, flying everywhere, and the excitement and confusion they spread caused our movements to pass unchallenged.

Once at the meeting-place we pricked our horses into a gallop and set out, a stern determined band dead set on revenge, and resolved every man of us to achieve the end we had at the cost of life itself.

I rode at the head, with Markov as guide; Zoiloff and Spornow behind me, and the rest, four abreast, keeping order like a small cavalry detachment. The night was bright with moonlight, and the country lay around us everywhere still and sunk in sleep. Scarce a soul was astir in the hamlets through which our road passed, but I took the utmost precaution to prevent any mischance.

As we reached each village, I called a halt and sent Markov forward to see that all was clear, for I half expected that Kolfort would have foreseen our pursuit of Christina and have posted men to stop us. To save time we gave Markov three minutes; and if

he did not return or fire a shot to give an alarm, we clattered after him at full gallop.

So long as it was night, there was no one of whom we could make inquiries, and thus we were riding somewhat at random; but as soon as the dawn should begin to streak the east I knew the peasants would soon be astir, and that then we might pick up a trace or two of those we were seeking.

Then Markov made a valuable suggestion.

'Will your Honour let me ride on ahead some half mile or so? We are nearing Liublian now, and if I am alone I may get news which would be refused to so large a body of us together. I may see any danger, too, and be able to warn you.'

'A prudent thought, Markov,' I said, bidding him ride on. 'If we see you riding back to us, or if we hear you fire a shot, we shall draw rein and wait till you join us;' and with that he plunged ahead at full speed, and we watched him till he was out of sight over a rise in the road.

I told Zoiloff the arrangement, and we were discussing the situation in jerky whispers while we halted, when one of my men came galloping up in great excitement.

'My lord, we are being pursued. I had to stay behind to get a stone out of my horse's hoof, when I heard the sound of horses galloping some way behind me.'

'How far behind?'

'I cannot say—the night is very still. Perhaps half a mile, or maybe a mile.'

'Ride on at once and overtake Markov, and warn him to draw into cover. Off with you! We must find out who the horsemen are and their strength,' I added to Zoiloff.

'There is a small wood there, which will do for cover, Count,' he replied instantly. 'Let the men ride there and take our horses, while you and I stay on foot to watch the new-comers.'

I told Spornow to post the men in the covert, and Zoiloff and I lay down in some bushes to wait for the pursuers.

It was an anxious moment, and we lay close together, whispering in hurried conference. We had not long to wait.

'I hear them,' whispered Zoiloff, gripping my arm. His ears were quicker than mine, but a moment later I, too, caught the clatter of horses' feet and then the clash of accoutrements.

'Troops,' I whispered; and we both peered between the bushes, straining our ears, through the grey twilight of the dawn.

As they reached the foot of the rise near the top of which we

were concealed the party slackened speed, first to a trot and then to a walk, to ease the horses.

'I hope to Heaven none of our horses neigh,' whispered Zoiloff earnestly.

I made no reply. I was too anxious for speech, for such a chance might ruin everything. I almost held my breath as the first of the horsemen came into view, and then my companion gripped my arm again in a spasm of irresistible excitement.

'Kolfort, by the luck of hell!' he breathed, and sure enough, in the second line of three, I recognised the grim, stern face of that implacable man.

So excited was I that I almost forgot to count the men with him, and a thousand thoughts, wild and incoherent, rushed through my mind as the band of horsemen came up at a quick walking pace, got abreast, then passed on up the rise, and dipped out of sight as they broke again into a gallop, the footfalls of the horses dying away very quickly over the summit of the hill.

'I hope to the Lord he's going to the Princess!' exclaimed Zoiloff as we scrambled to our feet.

'More likely he wants to be in a position to prove his absence from the city when the Prince is being carried off,' said I. 'But wherever he's going we must know and follow.'

I ran across to where our men were posted and told off one of them to follow hot on the heels of the party and be ready to guide us, and I gave him enough start of us to allow for our not being heard.

'It's clear he wasn't following us,' said Zoiloff. 'There were only twelve men all told in the party. What a chance we have missed! If we had only known, we could have lined the road just where we two lay, and they'd have walked right into the trap. Only twelve to nearly twenty of us! and we should have had him safe enough. God! If we could only get hold of him, the safety of the Princess would be a simple matter enough.'

'We may do it yet,' said I as I mounted, and we set off again in pursuit of those we had believed to be in pursuit of us.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

## THE ATTACK.

It was true enough of course that we had missed a glorious chance in not surprising and overcoming General Kolfort's party and making him a prisoner; but with our end in view it would have been madness to risk an encounter when we had absolutely no knowledge of the strength opposed to us. A defeat at such a moment would have overthrown all our plans and have involved the abandonment of Christina to whatever fate might be in store for her.

It was true, too, that in allowing the General to pass and his men to get in touch with the others who were guarding the Princess, we had increased our difficulties; and the result of a hurried consultation with Zoiloff as we rode forward was a decision to seek and overtake the General's party and try conclusions with them.

For this purpose, however, we had wasted valuable time, and the now rapidly lightening dawn greatly lessened the chance of catching them unawares, and vastly increased the risk. But we were in no mood to count the chances too gingerly, and we dashed along at as rapid a pace as our horses could travel.

The road was execrable—rough and uneven beyond description, with large loose stones scattered about in it in a way that made the going exceedingly difficult, and in parts galloping was impossible.

We had ridden in this way about half an hour, constantly having to draw rein for either the roughness of the road or the steep hills, when we came up with the man we had sent to warn Markov, and the other who had been despatched to follow the General's party.

Markov had undertaken the spy work in preference to the man I had despatched, and the change was a good one. I had not been free from the fear that Markov might be surprised by the General, despite our precaution in sending to warn him, and it was good news that he was safe.

We did not stay our progress a moment. The men rode by my side as each in turn gave me his report, and then dropped back into the ranks behind as we thundered forward, eager to overtake the General before he should fall in with any other troops; and



the best news that the men brought us was that we were gaining fast upon them, and that Kolfort was not far ahead.

This spurred us to further effort, and we were rushing on filled with the hope of catching him, when I saw Markov in the distance galloping wildly in our direction. I ordered a halt instantly, and drew up to await him.

'I have tracked them, my lord,' he said hurriedly; 'but the news is bad. General Kolfort and his party are in a house, about a mile ahead, that belongs to him, and it is there the Princess Christina has been carried. At least I judge so, for I slipped from my horse and managed to find out that there were a number of soldiers about; and I spied a travelling carriage in front of the house with all the signs of a long journey on it. The horses had been taken out, and I judged it had just been left where it stopped, the horses being taken to the stables. I saw General Kolfort's party halt there, and he and one or two with him entered the house while the soldiers went round to the back.'

'How many soldiers in all?' I asked.

'From what I heard in the city last night, I gathered there were about a dozen in charge of the Princess; I counted another dozen with General Kolfort—say from twenty-five to thirty, all told, sir.'

'We can do it if we surprise them,' said I, turning to Zoiloff. 'Not so good a chance as we had just now, but still a chance.'

'Certainly,' he agreed. 'Catch them while off their guard and probably getting food after their ride;' and in less than a minute we were moving forward again, Markov riding on my left.

Just before we came in full view of the house, Zoiloff, Spernow, and I rode forward to reconnoitre the ground and plan the attack. The house lay well situated for such an attempt. We were looking down on it from a slight hill, and on three sides some fairly thick wood and shrubbery shut it in, in which a couple of regiments could have been posted had we had such a force available. We could see three or four men in the front of the house and in the road, left to do sentry work; but they were lolling about chatting together, and obviously thinking of nothing less than any such attack in force as we meditated; and, had we dashed up the road in a body, it was likely enough we could have carried the place before any effective resistance could have been offered.

But we formed a far different plan. Markov led us along the ridge of the hill fringed with trees to a point from which we could command a view of the rear of the house, and then I observed

something that gave me an idea and made my heart leap with exultation. Preparations were going forward quickly to give the soldiers their breakfast, and I saw all the things being carried from the house to a low building across a wide yard that looked like a barn. The soldiers were chaffing the women and helping to carry the food and vessels; and in a moment my plan was ready.

'We shall catch them like rats in a trap,' I cried to Zoiloff, as I pointed this out to him. 'The place is made for us and couldn't be better. We'll time our visit when the men are just at breakfast yonder, and, if a couple of our fellows can steal up unseen, that big door can be slammed, and there won't be more than half a dozen left for us to deal with about the house. We shall cage the old fox to a certainty. Let Spernow and two men creep along this way and down under cover of those trees to the entrance to the yard, and post themselves there. The main portion can get to the house through the orchard below us'—and I pointed to the spots I meant—'and we shall be into the place before they even dream that we are near. Once we get close to the house, do you and half a dozen make for the front and settle with anyone there, making an exit from the house impossible. I'll enter by the back with the rest of us and square accounts with anyone inside. The horses must be left up here in the woods, tethered; we can't spare a man to stay with them.'

We discussed the minor points of the attack, fixed the moment, and left it that Spernow's closing the door upon the troops at breakfast should be the signal. If things went wrong with him and the men escaped, we settled that Zoiloff should, as arranged, rush round to the front, but that I and the men with me should hasten to Spernow's assistance and attack the men there.

We went back to the rest of the party, led them all into the wood on the hill from where we had made our observations, had the horses fastened over the hill and well out of sight of the house, and then, with arms all ready, crept back to the edge of the wood to wait for the moment to commence.

The movement and bustle of preparation were going on briskly below; the maids and the men were hurrying and scurrying in all directions, and there was such stir and life that it threatened to be impossible for us to creep down unseen.

Gradually there came a change. Things grew quieter, and presently the servant girls went into the house and did not return. We saw the soldiers, laughing and joking, cross in

couples and threes to the barn ; two of those who had been on guard in the front came running round, rested their muskets against the wall of the barn outside, and joined their comrades within ; and the place was quiet and unguarded. I gave the word to advance, and a moment later we began to wend our way stealthily down the hill side, closing gradually on the house. Not a word was spoken, and not a sound betrayed our presence. When we reached the point where Spernow was to leave us to get to the other end of the yard, I whispered to him to take an extra man in case of emergencies, and then at the head of my men I threaded my way up the side of the orchard, with Zoiloff close in attendance.

All went well. We reached a low mud wall that parted the orchard from the homestead yard, and halted there until Spernow should give the signal by slamming-to the great barn door. By peering through the branches of some fruit trees I could see the spot where he was to post himself. Just when all was about in readiness, and he and his three men were standing at the end of the barn, round the corner of it fortunately, one of the soldiers came out, picked up one of the muskets leaning against the wall, and stood a moment laughing and chaffing with those within. He was one of the sentries, and called to those within to be quick. Then, whistling carelessly, he shouldered his weapon and moved away.

Moments were growing precious now. Would Spernow wait for the man to disappear round the front at the risk that others of the soldiers would finish and come out, or would he act while the man was in full view and take the risk of a shot? He was in dire hesitation ; and I could see him peep round the corner of the barn and peer anxiously after the man.

Then something seemed to decide him—he told me afterwards he heard the men in the barn beginning to move—and with quick stealthy steps he and his men rushed to the great door, slammed it to, and secured it. The soldier was attracted by the noise, turned, saw what had happened, raised an alarm, and was in the act of firing at Spernow when one of the latter's men shot him and he fell to the ground.

At the same time Zoiloff called his followers and dashed for the front of the house, while I, seeing that all was well with Spernow, rushed to the back door. It was slammed in my face, but a blow from our guns smashed it in, and after a short delay we gained the passage.

All the house was in wild alarm, and the soldiers in it put themselves in my way, offering a stubborn resistance. But we outnumbered them by three to one, and after a scrimmage that was hot enough while it lasted we overpowered them, struck their weapons from their hands, bound them, and thrust them into a room in the custody of a couple of men with strict orders to shoot if any nonsense was attempted.

Our surprise was in that respect completely and triumphantly successful, but in regard to one of the chief objects it failed. The way which we had chosen for Zoiloff to make his rush to the front of the house was blocked by some outhouses which we had not seen, and he and his men had had to return and run round to the other side. The delay caused was not long, but it was fatal, for the first thing he saw on reaching there was General Kolfort in company with a couple of attendants, presumably officers, spurring at topmost speed in the direction of Samakovo. He came rushing into the house, his face black in his deep disappointment, and told me the ill news, just as we had finished our scrimmage with the men inside.

I saw at once pursuit would be hopeless. I should not have dared divide our little party even had there been a good prospect of overtaking the fugitives, and to send them on a wild-goose chase would have been worse than madness; moreover, our horses were away on the top of the hill, and already somewhat spent with the fierce ride. But it took some moments to get Zoiloff to see the uselessness of such an attempt—moments that could ill be spared, seeing all that we had yet to do. But I was firm, and he gave in at length.

‘Take our men and secure those fellows in the barn, or we shall have them breaking out. Find the best horses you can, too, and have them into the carriage as quickly as possible, and I will see the Princess and tell her to be ready at once. We dare not waste a minute or all will be lost.’

I dashed up the stairs, and after searching a couple of empty rooms found one with the door locked.

‘Are you there, Princess? It is I, Count Benderoff,’ I cried, turning the key and partly opening the door.

She answered me and I entered. She was calm but pale, with the little Broumoff at her side, very agitated.

‘We have heard the noise, but could see nothing from here, and have been filled with anxiety as to what it meant. What has happened?’ cried the Princess.

'I can say no more now than that when we heard last night that you had been carried off we followed at once, and happily are now in possession of the house; but you must be ready to fly at once.'

'What of General Kolfort? He came here only a few minutes since and threatened me with all the terrors of a Russian gaol. He was like a madman.'

'Most unluckily he has escaped us, and may return at any moment in force. Will you get ready at once? Our only hope is to make for the frontier before we can be pursued.'

'I am ready now,' she cried, throwing on her travelling wraps. 'Come, Nathalie, come, the Count has saved us.'

The girl was dressed almost as quickly as the Princess, and together we went down to the front to wait for the carriage.

'Have you had anything to eat? We have a long journey before us.'

'I could not think of food.'

Without a word, I got some milk and cakes and bread, and put them in the carriage, to which Markov was already harnessing horses. Then I described in the fewest possible words what had happened, and they both listened in breathless interest.

'And Michel?' asked Mademoiselle Broumoff eagerly.

'Is safe,' I answered, with a smile, 'and has behaved splendidly, like the magnificent fellow he is.'

As soon as the carriage was ready I told Markov to draw out into the road in readiness to start, and I ran through to call off our men. Zoiloff met me excited, hot, and breathing hard.

'We have secured them all right. I filed up the men, and when we threw open the door the caged men were met with a line of muskets. They had no fight in them, for they had no arms. We have bound every man, and to make pursuit impossible I have had every horse in the stables shot. A cruel job, but necessary; and I have brought away the men's arms. We may start, Count. Our men are already away for their horses, and will meet us at that bend in the road above.'

'Good,' said I; but I wished he had brought the horses with us for remounts instead of shooting them.

'Good, yes; but much better if that wily old devil, Kolfort, hadn't slipped through my fingers.'

'What is the route, Markov?' I said, going out to him. 'We dare not return to Sofia. How can you reach the nearest point on the frontier road where we can get fresh horses for the carriage?'

'We must go back to within three miles of the city, sir, and then I can pick a way round and strike the west road there.'

'Don't keep on this road for a yard longer than is absolutely necessary. It is dangerous. But do your best. Push on with all speed. We shall overtake you.'

As I finished speaking Spernow came running from the house and rushed to the carriage window. I let the carriage stand half a minute that he might exchange a word or two with Mademoiselle Broumoff, who I knew was very eager to see him, and while they were speaking the Princess looked out of the window, beckoned Zoiloff and gave him her hand and a word of hearty thanks for all he had done in her behalf.

It was a thoughtful, gracious act, and I was as glad as Zoiloff himself, who stood aside with a flush on his stern face to let the carriage pass when I gave the word to Markov to start.

'The fairest and best of all women on earth,' he said, enthusiastically, as we three watched the carriage dash up the hill that led from the house. 'I hope to heaven we shall get start enough to save her;' and he glanced back anxiously along the road that Kolfort had gone, as if he feared that pursuit might already be on foot.

And the same fear infected us all as we followed his gaze. But there was no sign of any pursuit; and we hurried up the hill to the spot where the men were to meet us with our horses.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### SUSPENSE.

As we three hurried up the hill we discussed earnestly our plans; and the supreme seriousness of the failure to secure the person of General Kolfort grew more vividly forcible the more we considered it.

We could have held him a prisoner in his own house easily and without creating any alarm at his disappearance. And the Princess could have gained the frontier before ever a question had been asked as to her whereabouts. I gnashed my teeth as I thought of it.

Now, however, he would raise the alarm at the first possible



moment. He knew that we were in considerable force, and not only could he send troops after us, but by telegraph he could send instructions to have us intercepted at any one of a dozen points.

'Does anyone know where the wires run from Ichtman and Samakovo to Sofia?' I asked. 'If we could cut them, we might save some hours when even minutes may be vital.'

'Of course. Why didn't we think of it before?' exclaimed Zoiloff. 'I know them. They run along the course of the projected railway. I can find them inside an hour. The line is to touch Liublian, and must run close here somewhere.'

'Then take a couple of men as soon as we are mounted and rattle off across country and cut them, and rejoin us with all possible speed. You will easily overtake the carriage;' and the moment we met our men he started to carry out the plan.

I then arranged the order of our ride. I left Spernow in command of the greater number of men, with orders to follow in straggling formation until we had passed through Liublian; then they were to close up and keep the carriage in sight. One man was to ride about a mile or so in the rear to watch for any signs of pursuit. For this work I chose the man whose horse was the fleetest and freshest, and ordered him to keep a sharp look-out behind him, and at the first sign of anything wrong to gallop after us at top speed to give us the earliest possible warning.

I myself took three men with me and rode forward at once, intending to overtake the Princess and act as immediate escort.

I had little difficulty, unfortunately, in getting up with the carriage, for Markov, with all his skill as coachman, was only able to make a very indifferent pace over the villainous roads. The carriage bumped and rolled and jumped in the deep ruts and over the stones in a way that filled me with alternate fear that it was travelling too fast for the safety of the occupants, and of despair that so slow a pace would make pursuit an easy enough matter.

It was a great, heavy, lumbering, travelling coach, built for the comfort of those who were content to travel at an easy rate; and about as little suited for the purpose of rapid flight as anything could be. I could have cursed it, as it lumbered along groaning, creaking, straining, threatening to topple over at every other lurch, and distressing the horses, powerful though they were, until the sweat lathered on their flanks and dripped on the rough, cruel road.

'Is there a hope of getting any better carriage at Liublian?' I asked Markov, riding up to him as we neared that place. 'We



shall never reach the frontier in this thing ; an open cart would be better. Try if you can't get something. Steal it if you can't hire or buy it.'

'The horses are nearly done already, your Honour,' said Markov ; although we've only come some seven miles. I'll try.'

'You must be quick,' I said, as I fell back behind again.

Despite the very urgent need for haste, we entered the place, driving very leisurely, and drew up at the inn, when Markov and I entered to make inquiries. We were in luck. The man had a comparatively light open cart for sale and a couple of strong young horses. A few minutes found the bargain struck, and while my men were refreshing themselves the horses were put in, and Christina and her companion left the great, ugly, cumbersome carriage to take their places in the cart.

'Could we get peasants' clothes?' suggested Mademoiselle Broumoff. 'Any kind of disguise might help us.' It was a happy thought, and the ever resourceful Markov acted on the hint directly, and procured cloaks and headgear.

'Better put them on when we are clear of the place,' I decided, as Markov put the bundle into the cart.

'I am afraid you will find the road to safety very rough, Princess,' I said as I helped her into the cart. I had not spoken to her since leaving the General's house.

'I am causing you all sore trouble,' she answered, smiling sadly. 'How shall I ever thank you enough?'

'We shall have our reward when we see you safe in Servia.'

'Ah, I ought to have done what you advised yesterday and have gone then. All this would have been spared us.'

'We could not foresee what old Kolfort had planned for last night. I thought the road would have been as open to-day as it was yesterday.'

'It is like you to lighten the blame, but it is my fault.'

'We are ready, your Honour,' called Markov.

'Forward, then,' I said. 'Cautiously out of Liublian, and then press on with all the speed you can make.'

I mounted, and was in the act of starting when a horseman was seen riding hard up the road we had come. It was Zoiloff, and I welcomed him gladly.

'I've done it,' he said exultantly. 'I don't know whether there are any other wires, but I've cut the main ones, and that will probably cause some delay. But how came you to halt here?' he asked anxiously.

I explained the change of vehicles, and we rode on after the Princess.

‘You passed Spernow?’ I asked.

‘Yes, and left my men to follow with his. He tells me he is to join you as soon as he is clear of Liublian; he should be near now;’ and he glanced back as I thought with some anxiety.

‘We have done well so far. It was a stroke of luck to get rid of that lumbering old carriage,’ said I.

‘True, but we have already been a long time covering very little ground, and must press forward. Our pursuers won’t sleep on the road. I’m surprised we haven’t heard from them before now.’

It was unlike him to meet alarm halfway in this fashion, but I made no answer except to urge my horse to greater speed, so as to close up the distance between us and the Princess.

Markov was now driving at a very rapid rate, the road was much better, and I felt my spirits rise as we covered the ground quickly. Every yard gained safely made the prospect of escape more hopeful.

‘Spernow should have joined us by now,’ said Zoiloff again presently, as we were breathing the horses up a steep hill.

‘We have been travelling much faster since we changed conveyances, and his cattle may be a bit stale,’ I replied, trying to reassure him.

‘I am afraid something’s going wrong with him. It’s not like him to play the laggard in this way. Can he have been overtaken by Kolfort’s men and surprised?’

‘Scarcely that. We’ve got a picket thrown out behind and he’d have warning. If there was any sign of danger, I told him to close up with us at once, so that we could make a stand together. One or two of the horses may have given out.’

‘I don’t like it,’ said Zoiloff; and when we reached the top of the hill we turned and looked back along the white road, searching eagerly for some sign of Spernow’s coming. We saw nothing, and the doubts which made Zoiloff’s face so grave began to affect me.

‘I am inclined to go back,’ he murmured.

‘We can’t spare you, Zoiloff,’ said I quickly. ‘If anything is wrong with him, you alone can do no good; and if anything is to go wrong with us, we are too few already for safety.’

‘I could find out what it means.’

‘Or be cut off yourself;’ and with that we resumed our ride my companion’s face unusually gloomy and thoughtful.

'How far are we from Sofia, Markov; and when do you turn off?' I asked, riding up to him.

'About five miles from the city, your Honour, a little more than two from the branch road I am making for.'

'We've only a few minutes more on the main road,' I said, falling back to Zoiloff; 'and, once away from it, our chances will be fifty in a hundred better. It's this road I've feared.'

'Ha! Here comes news!' exclaimed my companion suddenly, a few minutes afterwards, turning in his saddle and looking back. 'And bad news too,' he added.

A single horseman was dashing down a hill behind us, and as we turned a number of other horsemen reached the crest and came streaming down the hill after him, the sunlight glistening through the cloud of white dust as it fell on their arms.

'That should be Spernow and our men,' said I anxiously.

'It is Spernow, but they're not our men. I feared it meant mischief. They are troopers; and I can count a dozen of them. Tell Markov to drive like the wind. They're after us.'

A bend in the road at that moment cut off our view, and almost directly afterwards Markov turned away to the left into a narrow lane, putting his horses to the gallop.

'We shall have to fight for it, Count,' cried Zoiloff. 'There didn't seem more than a dozen troopers that I could see, and, with Spernow, we shall be six. We can hold them at bay in this narrow lane, and perhaps drive them off.'

At that moment a loud shout of dismay came from Markov, and we saw him pull his horses up in a scramble.

'What's the matter?' I called, riding up.

'I've taken the wrong lane, your Honour, cursed fool that I am,' he cried in sore distress. 'I know it now; there is no outlet. I should have driven on for about five hundred yards farther;' and he backed his horses as if to turn them.

It spelt absolute ruin.

'There's no going back, Markov,' I said decisively. I was calm enough now for all the trouble.

'The devil!' exclaimed Zoiloff. 'Well, we must make a fight of it.'

'Stay a moment. Where does this lane lead, Markov?'

'To a peasant's homestead, with no outlet anywhere.'

'Forward to that, then—at a gallop. We can hold the house against the men with far better chances than here,' I said to Zoiloff. 'Besides, they may not have seen us turn off the road, and may go on to the next turning. But what of Spernow?'

'He was gaining on them fast, and will escape in any event,' said Zoiloff; 'but it's a perilous fix.'

A couple of minutes later we halted in front of the cottage, to the infinite surprise of the inmates. Markov knew them, however, and while he was explaining things to them the rest of us set to work to put the place in readiness to resist the expected attack. Fortunately it lent itself well to the purpose; and, long before the peasant owner had been pacified with a good round sum of money, every door and window was closed and barred, and the horses and cart had been stabled close to the rear of the house in a shed, the door of which we could easily command, so as to prevent anyone trying to steal off with them.

The Princess and her companion were placed in an upper room, well out of the danger of stray bullets; and, though we were breathless with our exertions, we were quite prepared to give our visitors a warm reception before a sign of the soldiers or of Spernow was visible.

Both Zoiloff and I kept an anxious look-out from a window in the roof of the cottage which gave a view of a considerable portion of a lane that led to the homestead; but the minutes crept on until a quarter of an hour, half an hour, an hour, passed without a sign or trace of either our friend or our enemies; and, indeed, until we grew as anxious to see the former as to know we had escaped from the latter.

What could it mean? Zoiloff and I exchanged many an anxious question and hazarded many futile guesses. I was inclined to hope that the soldiers had not seen us after all, and that in our little hiding-place we had not only escaped them, but had been overlooked by any other parties that might have been despatched in search of us.

At the end of an hour I sent Zoiloff down to see that food was prepared both for the men and for our horses; and when another hour passed without any sign of disturbance the hopes of all of us began to rise. The one thing that had caused me more anxiety than anything else was the obstacle which daylight presented to a successful flight; and when noon came and passed, and the afternoon shadows began to lengthen, I was glad enough; for every hour that passed diminished the risk and increased our chances of getting to the frontier unseen in the darkness of the night.

Moreover, the rest was just what the horses needed; and thus on both accounts the hanging hours of safety on that hot

summer's day were doubly precious to us. Markov was certain that under the cover of the night he could find his road unerringly; and though his blunder in the morning had at first caused such a panic and had shaken my confidence in his knowledge, I was ready to believe him now.

'I could drive it blindfolded, your Honour,' he said earnestly, when I questioned him. 'I know every house, and cottage, and tree, almost ever bump in the road—more than that, I could find my way secretly across the country were every road and bridle-path choked with armed men. It is my own country!' he exclaimed vehemently.

'How long will it take you?'

'It is fifty miles from the frontier to the first place where I can get fresh horses, and perhaps fifteen from here to that—at the outside say seventy miles. I can do it in seven hours with such horses as are waiting for me at every stage—probably less.'

'You will be ready to start as soon as it is dusk,' I told him, and, as the afternoon passed, I went to acquaint the Princess with our plans.

'You have left us long alone, Count,' she said with a smile. 'And I have needed you sorely. Nathalie here is in distress for news of Lieutenant Spernow.'

'You may feel assured on his account,' I said to the girl, who was very pale and troubled. 'When we saw him last he was gaining rapidly on his pursuers, and was not at all likely to fall into their hands.'

'But where is he? Why have you no news of him?' she wailed.

'Probably he knows no more than our enemies where we are. But he is safe. Both Captain Zoiloff and I are convinced of that.' Her fears were not to be stayed by words, however, and in truth I myself had more than a misgiving on his account.

The Princess was eager for the moment to come when she could start, and would have set out at once had I not told her of the far greater security which darkness would afford.

'What time is it now?' she asked.

'Just past four. At seven, or soon after, we may venture to start; and if all goes well, as Heaven grant it may, you will be across the frontier and in safety before the sun rises again.'

'I shall owe it to you,' she said, 'as indeed I owe so much already.'

'Not more to me than to all here with us. Indeed, this blessing of a shelter at the very nick of time we owe to the accident of Markov's blunder. We may well forgive him such a happy mistake.'

'Would you have me think I owe nothing to you?' she asked in a low voice, looking at me with a glance of love.

'Perhaps I may answer that question at a future time,' I returned in the same low tone. She blushed and dropped her eyes and was silent.

In the silence I heard the sounds of some commotion in the house below, and I started uneasily. 'Something has happened; I must go and see what it means!' I exclaimed; and with a hasty excuse I hurried away.

Something had indeed happened, for at the bottom of the stairs I found Spernow and Zoiloff in excited talk. I called them up, and together we entered the Princess's room, that he might tell us the story of his experiences, and relieve at once the anxiety of his sweetheart.

On seeing him she jumped up and, regardless of our presence, threw herself into his arms.

'Are you really safe, Michel?' she asked, gazing into his face with a look I could understand readily, and, laughing and crying by turns, she plied him with a hundred questions.

His story was of deep interest and moment to us, and, though I was in full mood to sympathise with the lovers, I was eager to hear it.

'I can tell my story in a very few words,' he said at length, turning to us. 'Just after we left Liublian we were attacked by a party that outnumbered us by five to one. Our man in the rear galloped up to warn us as you had ordered him, Count, but the troops were right on his heels, and, as our horses were anything but fresh, I dared not risk a race in the effort to reach you. I determined to fight it out there and then, but from the first we hadn't a chance. The troops fired not at us, but at the horses, until only two of us were left mounted. The rest you can gather. We had never a chance. My men resisted as long as resistance was possible, but one after another they were surrounded, disarmed, and secured. When all was lost we two fled, but some dozen of the troops came pricking after us. My companion's horse was shot; but almost by a miracle neither my horse nor myself was touched, though the firing was heavy enough. When I came down that hill yonder, I saw you, and saw you turn



into the lane. In a moment I knew the mistake you had made, for I know this country to a yard, and it occurred to me to pass the entrance to the lane in the hope that the troops behind me had not seen you. I made for the next turning, therefore—that which you should have taken but happily did not—and to my intense relief the men behind, thinking no doubt that I was following you, followed me. The rest was easy enough. My horse was fleetier than theirs, and I led them a dance at a rattling speed for some ten miles. Then I dismounted, and, giving my horse a whack with my hand, sent him on without me, while I slipped into some bushes and waited for the men to pass. They did this, swearing prettily, as you may imagine, and as soon as they had gone by I set off across country in a bee-line for this place, thinking it not unlikely that you would take refuge here for a while. And here I am, and that's all.'

Our congratulations poured upon him, and then Zoiloff and I went away, that he and the little Broumoff might be together. It was the best reward we could make him just then.

'Those men will try back when they find he's fooled them,' said Zoiloff, 'and we had better be ready.'

'They'll have to come soon,' said I, 'or they'll find the nest empty and the birds flown.'

'They've over two hours yet,' he returned drily, and together we went back to our watch-window in the roof, giving orders that the house was to be kept as silent as if it were deserted.

The minutes were weighted now with the old fears and suspense, and scarce a word passed between my staunch friend and myself. And when we spoke it was in a whisper, as though the men had already come. For an hour more nothing occurred to disturb us, and once again the flame of hope began to kindle. But it was only to be ruthlessly quenched.

When a glance at my watch told me that an hour and a quarter had gone by, we saw that which made us start and draw breath quickly.

Two troopers came riding slowly up the lane, looking carefully to right and left as they approached. The peasant's dog barked loudly, and at the sound they stopped, and peered curiously at the house. Then they advanced until they stood close to the yard-gate, and both stared at the house and spoke together.

We held our breath in suspense.

The closed doors and shutters puzzled them, and after a few



moments one of them dismounted, handed the reins of his horse to his companion, pushed open the gate, and walked up towards the house.

At that moment fortune served us a scurvy trick. Down below a roar of laughter broke out among our men, loud enough to reach us.

The soldier heard it too.

We heard him strike a lusty summons on the door panels and call to those within. Then everything was as still as the grave.

The man knocked again, and when the door remained unopened he went back to his companion, mounted his horse, and, giving some instructions, set off up the lane at a quick canter. The second man drew back into the shade of a tree and waited, keeping his eyes warily upon the house all the while.

‘We may as well get the men posted,’ said Zoiloff. ‘That fellow will be back in a minute with all there are with him. We’re in for a scrimmage.’

He went down at once to give the necessary orders, while I stayed to watch.

I had not long to wait. In a few minutes I heard the advancing footfalls of horses, and a number of troopers came swinging up the lane at the trot. I counted thirteen in all, and thanked Heaven there were no more.

But it meant fight, and I saw the man in command of the party taking his observations, and giving his instructions to those under him to surround the house.

There was no need for me to watch longer. There would soon be plenty of other work on hand.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### A FORLORN HOPE.

I LEFT the window and hurried down to tell the Princess the bad news. Spornow was still there, sitting apart, exchanging love confidences with Mademoiselle Broumoff, and they all started up at my sudden entrance.

'The troops have found us out, Princess, and there will probably be some trouble before we get rid of them and shake them off. I wish to impress upon you the necessity for you to remain close in the corners of the room for fear of mishap. Spernow, will you go to Captain Zoiloff? He is below with the men.'

The Princess took the news very calmly.

'Do you think they will attack the house?' she asked.

'I fear so—or, rather, I hope so; for, if not, we shall have to attack them, and I would rather act on the defensive.'

'There will be danger for you,' she said earnestly, looking into my eyes. 'You will be careful—for my sake;' and she laid her hand on mine.

'I hope it will not be serious, and I will be careful,' I replied smiling. 'But we must not be beaten.'

'I trust no blood will be shed—no lives sacrificed. I cannot bear the thought of that.'

'We can have no thought but your safety.'

'But can we not be of some use—Nathalie and I?'

'I fear not, at present. But if there is need, depend upon it I will not fail to ask you. Come, Spernow.'

'Michel, let me have a gun. I would rather be by your side than cooped up here in suspense,' cried the girl with great spirit, holding her lover's hand. 'Now that you are with us I am not afraid.'

'We have not come to that yet, Mademoiselle,' I said, liking her spirit and courage. 'You need not be afraid. We are quite strong enough behind these walls to cope with the few men against us. But we must go.'

Christina pressed my hand again, and her lips murmured a prayer for my safety.

Zoiloff had been busy enough with his preparations, and when we reached him had posted his men. He had done a shrewd trick on leaving General Kolfort's house, and had brought away with him the men's carbines with a quantity of ammunition. These were now distributed in the rooms from which the work of defence was to be carried on; and he explained that his object was to create the impression that we were a much more numerous party than in reality.

'We can fire volleys from the different windows in very rapid succession, and they'll think the place is alive with men,' he said. 'But the main work must be done from the windows of each room on the floor above us. There are two in the front room and one

at the back, and we can from there command the approach to the front and back doors, and could hold the place against four times the number.'

We went to the front room and looked out.

The soldiers were taking matters very leisurely. Evidently they were confident that they would have no serious difficulty in carrying the house, even if we were inside, of which they still seemed to have doubts.

The leader was only a non-commissioned officer—a troop sergeant—and he appeared to be at a loss what to do. He was consulting with the two men who had ridden up first, and all three were gesticulating freely as they pointed to different parts of the house and yard.

The longer they debated, and the more time they wasted, the better for us. If they would only let the afternoon steal away and twilight come, we could in the last resource make a sally, have a brush at close quarters, and then trust to our horses to save us.

'Zoiloff, I have a plan,' I said, as an idea struck me. 'That man has made a fool's mistake. Every horse there is in full view, and can be picked off easily. Let our first volleys, when it comes to firing, be for the horses. Before the men even guess our intention, every horse will be killed or disabled, and not only will the men be unable to follow us, but prevented from riding for help.'

'Good!' he cried. 'We'll have every man at these two windows, and each man shall pick out his own target. A couple of rounds well aimed and the thing's done. But some one must keep a look-out at the back.'

'Nathalie will do that,' said Spernow eagerly; and he went at once to ask her, while the men were brought into the room and their orders given to them. We waited, watching closely for the commencement of hostilities.

'They don't like the look of things,' whispered Zoiloff, smiling grimly, 'and don't know what to do or how to start. Ah, now they've settled something,' he added as the leader came towards the house, knocked at the door, and called in a loud voice for it to be opened.

No answer was given, of course, and after he had repeated his summons he called:

'If the door is not opened we shall break it in.'

Getting no reply, he returned to his men, and sent four of

them round to the back of the house. Then one of the men called his attention to something at the side of the yard, and eight of them went and picked up a heavy balk of timber lying there.

'They're going to use it as a battering-ram,' said Zoiloff. 'We must stop that.'

'Wait,' I said quickly. 'When they are in position I'll warn them, and through the open windows we can then shoot the horses. Remember, men, level your guns first at the men, and when I tell you, aim at the horses, and shoot straight.'

The timber was heavy, the afternoon hot, the men fatigued and with no great zest for the business, so that they took a long time before they had brought it round near the door.

Then I threw up the window sharply, and called, in a ringing voice:

'Stop! We sha'n't allow that.'

Looking up, the troopers found themselves covered by the guns of our party, and, dropping the timber, they rushed like hares for cover—all save the leader, who flung curses at them for their cowardice.

'Now fire,' I said; and, levelling my rifle, I picked out a horse, and we fired our first volley.

'Quick! again!' and a second volley rang out.

The effect was indescribable. Five horses fell at the first round, and the rest stampeded and plunged so violently that any accurate aim the second time was very difficult. Only three fell, but the rest broke from their fastenings in a very frenzy of fear and galloped wildly off, plunging across country at a speed that made any thought of pursuit hopeless.

The men started to follow them, but were recalled by the leader, and came slinking back to cover like whipped dogs.

The loss of the horses was not their only misfortune, however, for in getting the log they had set down their carbines near the gate in a spot which we could cover with our guns. Seeing this, I called again:

'The man who touches one of those guns will be shot!'

The sergeant had plenty of pluck, and, though sorely perplexed by the turn things had thus suddenly taken, was as cool as if he had been on parade.

'What do you want here?' I cried.

'I want to know who's in the house,' he said.

'I am. What next?'

'Who else?'

'I decline to say.'

'Will you surrender without causing any more trouble?' he asked coolly.

'If you ask that again, you'll stand a good chance of asking no more questions in this world,' said I drily. 'You had better draw off your men while they are still unhurt.'

'You can't hope to beat us off,' he said doggedly.

'We can try.' At the reply he shrugged his shoulders.

'If you resist you must take the consequences,' he called.

'I am quite prepared for that.'

He turned away then as if to walk back to his men, but I saw him start; and then he did a really plucky thing, like the daring devil he evidently was. When he was halfway towards his men he made a quick rush to the guns and tried to snatch them up in his arms and bolt with them to cover. It was wasted courage. A couple of guns rang out, Zoiloff's for one, and the man rolled over with a groan, shot through the leg, with the carbines scattered round him.

His men made no effort to go near him, and so long an interval of inaction followed that I began to hope the struggle was already over before it had well begun.

'Lucky we shot those horses, or we should have had half the scoundrels bolting for reinforcements,' muttered Zoiloff.

'You'd better see what the men at the back are after,' I said; and even as I spoke the little Broumoff came running excitedly to tell us they were trying to get our horses from the shed behind.

Zoiloff hurried out with a couple of men, and a moment later I heard an exchange of shots.

'Run and see what has happened, Spernow, and let me know,' I said, and in a couple of minutes he returned to say all was well, and that Zoiloff had wounded one of the men and scared them off. They had made for the side of the house, he told me, and had been joined by the rest of the troopers; unfortunately there was no window at the side, so that we could neither watch nor threaten them.

Another long interval passed without the troopers making a sign of any kind, and I judged that their intention was simply to keep watch until reinforcements could come up, and guessed that they had sent one or more of the men away on foot in search of help.

It was now past six o'clock, and in less than half an hour it would be safe to make a start; I went to Zoiloff to consult.

My plan was to make a rush upon the men and drive them away sufficiently far to admit of our horses being put in the cart, and then risk the chances of flight. He agreed readily, for the inaction was vastly less to his mind than any fighting, and we made our preparations accordingly.

'We are seven to their nine or ten, say. The leader lies there wounded, you have disabled a second man, and they have sent away probably two and certainly one; and as we are armed and they are not, and we shall catch them unawares, we can certainly beat them off. We must then get the horses ready and be off. The sun's low now, and, as there is a mist rising, it will be dark enough for our purposes long before seven. And, anyway, we can't wait here to be trapped like rabbits as soon as they succeed in bringing up reinforcements.'

We set to work at once. The barricade of the back door was removed quietly and we all mustered by it in silence.

'Silence till we are outside,' I whispered. 'Then with a rush fall on them with more noise than force, and scare and drive them off.'

I lifted the latch noiselessly and, opening the door, stepped out, followed by the rest. Then with a loud shout we rushed round the house and caught the men as they stood smoking and talking, expecting nothing less than an attack from us.

They fled like chaff, helter-skelter in all directions, not venturing even a pretence at resistance. The two or three who had guns attempted to fire, but we struck up their arms and they fled as incontinently as the rest.

We made a show of pursuit, but it was no more than a show, and then all hands turned to the work of getting the horses harnessed and saddled. Meanwhile the mist was rising fast, and promised to form a welcome veil to our flight.

As a precaution I told one of our men to ride some distance along the lane to see that the road was clear, although I had no doubt that the troopers had been effectively disposed of; and I went to fetch the Princess and Mademoiselle Broumoff. All was ready and we were in good heart, when the man I had sent out came scampering back with news that filled me with sudden consternation.

He had seen a large body of horse soldiers at the end of the

lane on the high road, and with them were several of the men we had just beaten off.

I heard the news with genuine anguish of soul. We were hemmed in. The absence of any outlet except by the lane made escape absolutely hopeless, and for a moment I was borne down with despair.

‘We can only make a forlorn hope of it,’ said Zoiloff. ‘Charge them and try to make off in the confusion.’

I bit my lip and racked my brains in the effort to find some other than this useless, desperate scheme, and then suddenly a light beamed through the darkness.

‘Markov, can you find your way across the fields at the back here to the road—on horseback I mean?’

‘Yes, certainly, your Honour, but with the cart——’

‘Zoiloff, good friend, we must part now. There is only one way. You and Markov must ride with the Princess on horseback, escaping by the back across the fields till you strike the road. I must go in the cart with Mademoiselle Broumoff, if she is brave enough to risk this for the Princess;’ and I looked at her eagerly.

‘I will do anything,’ she assented readily.

‘It will make them think that only we six were in the house here; that Mademoiselle Broumoff is the Princess, and that we are making the rush to escape after the fight just now.’

‘I cannot consent to that,’ said Christina earnestly. ‘You will be going to certain capture.’

I drew her aside from the rest to urge her, and Zoiloff, understanding things with the quick instinct of a friend, led them out of the room on the plea of hastening the preparations.

As soon as we were alone she threw off all reserve, putting her hands on my shoulders and gazing at me with glowing eyes.

‘Do you press me to do this?’ she pleaded.

‘I must; it is your only hope of safety, and a desperate one at the best.’

‘You love me—Gerald?’

At the sound of my name, spoken prettily in tremulous hesitation, I felt the blood rush to my face.

‘With my whole heart,’ I cried hoarsely.

‘Do not send me from you, then; I urge you, by our love. Let us face what has to come together. I could meet death with you, but without you I am a coward. I cannot go.’



'You must go, Christina,' I said in a low voice, and scarcely steadier than her own.

'It is sending you to death, Gerald. I cannot do it. I could not live if harm came to you through me.'

'No such harm as that can come. But, for God's sake, think. If we remain together now it can be but for a few minutes. If we fell into these men's hands, their first act would be to separate us. You must go, my darling, you must.'

She gave a deep, heavy, sobbing sigh, and let her head fall on my shoulder.

'It is worse than death to go alone like this.'

'It is our only chance for a happier life. You must go, and even these moments of delay are imperilling everything. You must go—and at once. God knows how gladly I would have you stay with me if I dared.'

'Then go with me. Captain Zoiloff will——' The look on my face checked the sentence. 'Oh, I cannot part with you, I cannot!' She moaned in such agony that my heart ached. 'We may never meet again.'

'We shall meet again with you in safety, do not fear,' I said, trying to put a ring of hope into my voice, though my heart echoed her cry. 'You must go, my dearest;' and I began to lead her to the door, for every moment now might turn the balance between safety and capture.

As I moved she threw herself into my arms and clung to me convulsively. I held her to my heart; her face was close to me; my lips sought hers, and our very souls seemed to rush together in that kiss.

'Till death, Christina,' I whispered passionately.

'Till death, Gerald,' she answered; and then with a long trembling sigh she drew from me. 'Oh, how hard is fate!'

'Come, sweetheart,' I said; and without another word I led her out to the horses, to where good Zoiloff was waiting with gloomy growing impatience.

I lifted her tenderly to the saddle, and with a last yearning look and a lingering pressure of the hand I turned away, sick and sad with the sorrow of it all.

Zoiloff was mounted by then, and I wrung his hand.

'Guard her with your life, friend.'

'With my life,' he answered to the full as earnestly as I.

The plucky little Broumoff was already in the cart, with

Spernow close to her, and in another moment I was by her side.

There was still no sign of any troopers, and as for my scheme it was necessary that they should see us, I led my party round to the front.

‘When you hear the sound of our wheels, steal off at once, and make across the fields there for the road,’ I said, as a last word; ‘you will be out of sight in the mist before the men have a thought that we are not all together. Good-bye, and may God speed you!’

‘Amen to that,’ came in Zoiloff’s deep voice, and for the last time I met Christina’s eyes.

When I reached the front of the house I waited a moment, listening intently, and then hearing the sound of horsemen coming up the lane I started my horses, and as soon as we were through the gate I whipped them and dashed along the lane at a smart gallop, just as the foremost couple of troopers loomed into sight through the shroud of the white mist.

*(To be continued.)*

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

THE tedium of endless rain and impenetrable darkness in a Highland lodge is mitigated by the first numbers of the *Edinburgh Review*. Reading them, one looks across a whole century of literature, and is as remote from Jeffrey as Jeffrey was from Dean Swift, whom he hated so soundly. Jeffrey found that Queen Anne's wits—Pope, Swift, Addison, and the rest—no longer 'enter necessarily into the instruction of a liberal education.' Yet nearly a century later—namely, to-day—not to know Queen Anne's wits and their works is not to be liberally educated. In 1816 Jeffrey could talk of 'the decay of their reputation,' which after all has not decayed. The *Edinburgh* critics were applauding Byron's Corsairs and Medoras with both hands. It was before the newly risen glory of the *Corsair* that Swift and Pope were fading, like stars at dawn. But who reads the *Corsair* to-day? Says Jeffrey: 'We are of opinion that the writers who adorned the beginning of the last century have been eclipsed by those of our own time'—that is, practically, by 'the noble poet' Byron, for Jeffrey thought little of Scott's verse, and less than nothing of Wordsworth and of Coleridge. Shelley and Keats did not yet enter into the reckoning at all.

\* \* \*

Byron, however, had praised Coleridge, so had Scott. The *Edinburgh* suspected 'that what is thus lavishly advanced may be laid out with a view to being repaid with interest.' The authors of the *Lay* and of the *Corsair* were 'log-rollers;' they applauded the author of *Christabel* merely that he might applaud them. Or perhaps their praise was a Tory job. 'We cannot help wishing . . . that they would pay in solid pudding, not in empty praise,' would give places and pensions 'instead of puffing bad poetry, and endeavouring to cram nonsense down the throats of all the loyal and well affected.'

\* \* \*

Coleridge was thought a bad poet; Byron was almost another Shakespeare. Pope and Swift were eclipsed, in the opinion of these critics of 1816. Time has brought in his revenges: Byron has found his place; Coleridge has found his; Queen Anne's wits are still standing where they have always stood. This is the more comforting, as it suggests that critics of to-day are not infallible, and that the reputation of Tennyson may survive the censure of the late regretted Mr. George W. Steevens. In a volume styled *Things Seen*, remains of Mr. Steevens culled from the columns of the daily press and other sources, one finds an article on *In Memoriam*. For reasons not obvious, it is headed 'The New Tennyson.' The critique was written in 1893, when Mr. Steevens must have been very young. He remarks, as to the metre of *In Memoriam*, that 'it is made to bleat in.' Even that opinion may not survive for a century; like the judgment of Jeffrey and his staff, it may become a thing to marvel on. Mr. Steevens also remarked, as to *In Memoriam*, that 'the voice is not the voice of grief, and the words are hard to understand. Also they are not worth understanding.' It seems a pity to give a kind of permanence to this early critical exercise of Mr. Steevens. Better were it 'to wipe it up, and say nothing about it.' So I venture to think. But what am I? What is any critical body? Perhaps Mr. Steevens may have been right; perhaps he was as far adrift as Jeffrey and Hazlitt. Perhaps Tennyson 'has invented a new language, the language of the refined, Sentimental Coward.' Unluckily one cannot know what people will think a hundred years hence. If they still care for poetry, they may prefer the raucous voice of the Sentimental Costermonger to the 'bleatings' of the late Poet Laureate—bleatings which are 'not worth understanding.' Far be it from me to prophesy. Still, I really do think that it would have been better to suppress this early essay in criticism, on the chance of its being a trifle immature and crude. Mr. Steevens called *In Memoriam* 'a dandy heart-break.' Even so did Carlyle call Byron 'a dandy of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' These are not difficult or expensive epigrams; a man could make any number of them, 'if he abandoned his mind to it.' It is not to be certainly known that Mr. Steevens would have adhered to these ideas of his in later life. He was only twenty-four, or so, when he wrote about 'dandy heart-break'—only as old as Mr. Kipling was when he published *Plain Tales from the Hills*, a work not to be wiped out by time. Mr. Kipling, to be sure, when he acknowledged the praises of Tennyson, addressed him as a

private soldier addressing his general. That seems to me the preferable attitude of a young man of genius. Time will judge and the coming generations; but who shall forecast their verdict? It must be remembered that Mr. Steevens's criticism was written as if *In Memoriam* were a new book, just out, and to be treated as new books usually are treated by the press. Of that kind of critique the article is a good imitation, and the phrases which appear so crude may be successful strokes of satire, not at a poet, but at young reviewers, or old reviewers, for the person who criticised *Christabel* in the *Edinburgh Review* declared it to be as unintelligible as Mr. Steevens found *In Memoriam*. Coleridge's censor was probably Hazlitt, who was old enough to know better.

\* \* \*

More than once I have been chidden as a frivolous writer; and now I learn from the *Spectator* that I have been the occasion of frivolity in the editor of *The Critical Review*. It is a serial of which I never heard in my life. Nor, I fear, am I better acquainted with its editor, 'Principal Salmond, of the Scotch Free Church.' It appears that the light-hearted divine has asked, in his own *Critical Review*, 'whether it is true that' I am 'busy on a volume of sermons.' If the festive Free Kirk Principal will promise to preach it, I will gladly write *one* sermon for him; but I have heard that other men of letters are in the habit of supplying the needs of the clergy of all denominations at a very moderate figure. It is not my desire to undersell my theological comrades, but just one sermon is much at the Principal's service on the easy terms already mentioned. Many laymen, I have observed, pine to let some sermons out of them; it is no temptation to my virtue. Yet the longing is not unnatural; we hear so many sermons which we think we could rival in learning, logic, and eloquence if the pulpit were only thrown open to the laity. The early Scotch Reformers, if I do not misunderstand them, thought that sermons were directly inspired. If Principal Salmond entertains that opinion, he will reject my offer, as I am not in Presbyterian orders. Perhaps, by mere dint of bad example, I may so increase the frivolity hinted at by *The Spectator*, that the Principal will become a stone of stumbling to the godly. In that case, if he feels in danger, he may take a course of Dr. McCrie's historical works.

\* \* \*

Modern education does not seem to encourage a thoughtful habit of mind. Many persons can write letters who, for all that,

seem literally to possess no mind at all. They often write to me, and, doubtless, to other strangers, asking questions which, as they ought to know, cannot be answered by anyone short of a clairvoyant. Thus a lady actually writes to tell me that she has, in Australia, a book of a certain date which she does not remember, printed by the Aldi of Venice. She does not remember the name of the book, she does not remember the name of the author, and she asks me to estimate the pecuniary value of this mysterious treasure, now in the Antipodes. Yet more bewildering was a joint feat by a lady and a clergyman. The *padre* called at my house, and told me that he was an envoy from a Miss Somebody, of whose existence I had never heard. She desired me to tell her the name of a very valuable book which she thought that her father had once possessed, and she wished to know whether it was still in her library. This was as hard as the question put by Nebuchadnezzar to his diviners, when the king wanted to know what he had dreamed, and also the interpretation of the dream. I could not, of course, tell the parson the name of the book which his friend herself did not know, except by information derived from her dead father; and I doubt if a Christian is permitted to get knowledge through necromantic arts. But, even when inquiring book-owners do know the name of the book whose value they wish to ascertain, it would be better for them to consult Mr. Slater's volumes on the book-sales of the year or a respectable bookseller than to inquire of me as of an Oracle. A book may be of the right date, and yet, from some defect in condition, may be worth little or nothing.

\* \* \*

As another example of lack of thought, I may mention this: An anecdote of the death of a Boer soldier was lately told in these pages, on the authority of an eye-witness. Thereon a gentleman wrote to tell me that this Boer had slain a friend of his, and asked me whether my informant, who reported the death of the Boer, was his friend, whom the Boer had previously killed. Now how could a dead man describe the slaying of his own slayer? Not to perceive such difficulties as these really does imply a lack of precision of thought among the educated.

\* \* \*

If only Mr. Horace Hutchinson were here, in a place so lazy that 'it seemeth always after lunch!' Then we could discuss his 'Dreams' without the trouble of writing. His explanation of a dream in which a poor French scholar talks with some one who

speaks French far beyond what the dreamer can supply, is probably correct. The dreamer is merely over-estimating the elegance of the French which his own mind is supplying. But Maury (whom Mr. Hutchinson has read, as I infer) gives many examples in which the dreamer knows, and puts into the mouth of another character, things which he does not know (consciously) when awake. Dreaming, he can dive deeper into his store of memories than he can when awake. The book of Karl du Prel (which Mr. Hutchinson seems not to have read) is full of examples, and ought to interest people who care for these topics. The title ('The Philosophy of Mysticism') may alarm, but anyone can read the anecdotes. Many more will be found in a book which Messrs. Longman announce, 'Human Personality,' by Mr. F. W. H. Myers. This, I venture to predict, will be *the* book on these subjects.

\* \* \*

Our minds are usually at a low ebb in sleep, as Mr. Hutchinson justly remarks. But he need not be so sceptical as to cases in which the sleeping mind, whether in ordinary sleep, or somnambulism, or hypnotic trance, is much more acute than in waking life. From St. Augustine's works to the excellent 'Intellectual Powers' of Dr. Abercromby, he will find plenty of well-authenticated examples. In the 'Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research,' vol. xii. p. 14, is Professor Hilprecht's own account of how, in a dream, he correctly solved an almost insoluble problem of Assyriology. His waking mind possessed all the materials for the solution, except the colour of an agate on which a fragmentary inscription was engraved. His dreaming mind solved the problem. An Assyrian priest, in the dream, gave the correct answer, which Mr. Hilprecht verified by a visit to the Sultan's Museum at Constantinople. Of course this kind of thing is unusual, but it undeniably does occur.

\* \* \*

As for 'the people who say they fly,' of course it is easier to say that they lie. The difficulty is not with them; but with the great mass of sworn evidence by spectators, for which Mr. Hutchinson may refer to the *Acta Sanctorum*, the witch trials, and many other sources. The Lives of St. Colette and of St. Joseph of Cupertino will be enough for his purpose. When I dream that I float in air I also dream that I beg the spectators to make a note of it; an instance of professional pre-occupation.



I do not see how we can doubt that a dreamer who, in sleep, talks and describes the events of his dream, really *is* dreaming, though when he awakens he remembers nothing about it. This does not seem to satisfy Mr. Hutchinson; to me it appears demonstration absolute. As to the dream of strange scenery (not in my own experience), a lady tells me that she dreamed of seeing a singular glen marked by a very peculiar tree in the hills of Glencoe. Some time later she found the glen, tree and all, on the spurs of Ben Cruachan, which she had not previously visited. I never dreamed, as Mr. Hutchinson does, of hearing a sentence loudly uttered, in a familiar voice, after which he wakes. But a friend of mine did; the voice was that of his brother, then in Canada, who happened to die suddenly on that night. But, to my friend's joy he heard the voice (owing to the difference of longitude) some five hours *before* his brother's sudden death. So, as my friend remarked, 'it did not count.' In my case, unlike Miss Cobbe's, there *is* 'dream consciousness' before a dream of falling down from a height. I am on the height, for good dream reasons. I have to descend, I fall, and float pleasantly to the bottom. A friend tells me, as I write, that her experience is the same as mine. There seems to be plenty of variety, even in these stereotyped dreams.

\* \* \*

Never shall we know the exact truth, but I feel convinced that Queen Mary Stuart had an undiscovered affair of the heart some time before 1566. Elsewhere I have published the story, from Dr. Gregory's *Letters on Animal Magnetism*, of a young officer, who, in 1845, had a vision of a diamond cross, worn by Mary under her bodice. Then I consulted the inventory of Mary's bequests of her jewels, in 1566, an inventory not discovered till long after 1845. Here one found a diamond jewel which the Queen entrusted to Joseph Riccio, to be carried to a person whose name she could only tell verbally to her messenger. This is a pleasant coincidence, but it is yet more curious to find that, when Mary, a prisoner in England, was coquetting with the Duke of Norfolk, she wrote to him saying that she wore a diamond, his gift, secretly, under her dress. She longs for the day when his diamond and herself shall be the Duke's very own. This was in 1569. Mary, it would seem, was in the habit of wearing a concealed jewel, associated with a secret friend. But who was the donor to whom, in 1566, a diamond jewel was to be secretly restored, in case of the Queen's death? It could hardly be

Bothwell, for she left jewels to him, openly and by name. It does look as if there was an unknown person of importance in the secret history of this unhappy Princess.

\* \* \*

But what is her secret history to that of Queen Elizabeth, as set forth in *Francis Bacon's Cipher Story*? I have not seen this work, whereof an account appears in the New York *Saturday Review*. The author's name is not given; the publishers are The Howard Publishing Company, Detroit, Michigan. The gist of the revelation is that Francis Bacon was the son of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, by a secret marriage with Queen Elizabeth. But, if Elizabeth was married to Leicester, how could she offer him as a bridegroom to Mary Stuart? At the age of seventeen, Bacon was sent to France, because his Royal mother disapproved of his play, *Hamlet*, and did not wish the Prince of Wales, for he was no less, to write for the stage. Bacon, being now eighteen, fell in love with Margaret of Valois, wife of Henri of Navarre. Margaret was twenty-six, but she also fell in love with Francis Bacon, Prince of Wales; by the way it is not said that he had actually been created Prince of Wales. It was to Margaret that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's sonnets. But the course of true love did not run smooth, and Francis and Margaret were separated for ever.

\* \* \*

All these facts are derived by me from an article signed 'Agnostic,' in the journal already mentioned. Probably they are only a parody of the many absurd romances about Bacon and Shakespeare, which so strangely fascinate the quarter-educated. 'Agnostic,' no doubt, is mocking the discoverers of ciphered mysteries in the plays. But Mr. John Malone declares that he was asked to read a play by a Dr. —, based on some such mare's nest, and was actually offered 'a cheque for a considerable sum in exchange for a letter giving a favourable opinion of the — cipher theory.' Of course he declined. Yet another Shakespearean assures us that there were no guns or gunpowder in England in 1402, the date of the battle of 'Holmedon Hill.' Surely this is an error in military history. Barbour speaks of 'crakkis of war,' and Barbour wrote long before 1402.

\* \* \*

'There is no British or American lyric equal to O'Hara's.' What is O'Hara's tremendous piece? Here it is. Doubtless it is

better than any British lyric, but I think that some American lyrics are of at least equal merit. I fear that 'Yon marble minstrel's voiceless stone' is a little obscure, and 'advance' decidedly does not rhyme to 'haunts.' In some versions 'Angostura' is suppressed, perhaps as vulgarised by Angostura bitters.

The muffled drum's sad roll has beat  
The soldier's last tattoo;  
No more on Life's parade shall meet  
That brave and fallen few.  
On Fame's eternal camping ground  
Their silent tents are spread,  
And Glory guards, with solemn round,  
The bivouac of the dead.

No rumor of the foe's advance  
Now swells upon the wind;  
No troubled thought at midnight haunts  
Of loved ones left behind;  
No vision of the morrow's strife  
The warrior's dream alarms;  
No braying horn, no screaming fife,  
At dawn shall call to arms.

Their shivered swords are red with rust,  
Their plumed heads are bowed;  
Their haughty banner trained in dust  
Is now their martial shroud—  
And plenteous funeral tears have washed  
The red stains from each brow,  
And the proud forms by battle gashed  
Are free from anguish now.

The neighing troop, the flashing blade,  
The bugle's stirring blast,  
The charge, the dreadful cannonade,  
The din and shout are past—  
Nor War's wild note, nor Glory's peal,  
Shall thrill with fierce delight  
Those breasts that never more may feel  
The rapture of the fight.

Like the fierce Northern hurricane  
That sweeps his great plateau,  
Flushed with the triumph yet to gain,  
Came down the serried foe—

Who heard the thunder of the fray  
Break o'er the field beneath,  
Knew well the watchword of that day  
Was 'Victory or Death!'

\* \* \* \*

Full many a Norther's breath hath swept  
O'er Angostura's plain,  
And long the pitying sky has wept  
Above its moldered slain.  
The raven's scream, or eagle's flight,  
Or Shepherd's pensive lay,  
Alone now wake each solemn height  
That frowned o'er that dread fray.

Sons of the Dark and Bloody Ground!  
Ye must not slumber there,  
Where stranger steps and tongues resound  
Along the heedless air.  
Your own proud land's heroic soil  
Shall be your fitter grave;  
She claims from War his richest spoil—  
The ashes of her brave.

Thus 'neath their parent turf they rest,  
Far from the gory field;  
Born to a Spartan mother's breast  
On many a bloody shield.  
The sunshine of their native sky  
Smiles sadly on them here,  
And kindred eyes and hearts watch by  
The heroes' sepulchre.

Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead!  
Dear as the blood ye gave!  
No impious footstep here shall tread  
The herbage of your grave;  
Nor shall your glory be forgot  
While Fame her record keeps,  
Or Honor points the hallowed spot  
Where Valor proudly sleeps.

Yon marble minstrel's voiceless stone  
In deathless song shall tell,  
When many a vanished year hath flown  
The story how ye fell.

## AT THE SIGN OF THE SHIP.

Nor wreck, nor change, nor Winter's blight,  
 Nor Time's remorseless doom,  
 Can dim one ray of holy light  
 That gilds your glorious tomb.

THEODORE O'HARA.

\* \* \*

These verses, it appears, are the original form of a poem which has been much altered and 'contaminated' by editors, authorised or not authorised, in many popular editions. The merit of the work is rather elegiac than militant. The battle with its passion is ended, there remain pride and regret. Now these are really the motives of the best military poems; nay, from the *Chanson de Roland* to *The Flowers of the Forest*, or *Marmion*, the best war-poems rather celebrate disaster than victory. It is for the Lost Cause, or for the fallen in fight, that the muse sings her best, with rare exceptions, such as Drayton's *Agincourt*. Perhaps the mere joy of battle has never, or has rarely, inspired any poets except the wild skalds of the Sagas—men like Egil Skalagrim.

ANDREW LANG.

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